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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the process of change and acculturation in a group of Japanese female students studying English as a Second Language (ESL) in the United States. The first part of the report, based on data from five questionnaires administered to 36 students, discusses what the students did in their 6-week ESL class and how they reacted outside class. Each week of the students' experience is chronicled using this information, exploring student expectations, what made them comfortable in their new environment, perceptions of their academic performance, cultural differences, a home-stay experience, student autonomy, and language needs. The second part of the study examines this process from the perspectives of American ESL teachers, using data from interviews. It also looks at the students' adjustments after re-entry to their native culture, and the further adjustments made by two students upon later re-entry into the United States. The conclusion offers advice to ESL teachers about students' cultural adjustments, discusses possible program adjustments to accommodate these needs, makes some comments about Japanese teachers teaching ESL, and offers suggestions to Japanese women in an American ESL program. Appended materials include the five questionnaires and transcriptions of the interviews with American ESL teachers. Contains 17 references. (MSE)

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JAPANESE FEMALE STUDENTS IN AN AMERICAN ESL CLASS: CULTURAL CONFLICT AND CHANGE

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING DEGREE AT THE SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING BRATTLEBORO, VERMONT

BY

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This project by Yoshiko Miyakoshi is accepted in its present form.

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how Japanese female students changed and adjusted culturally in ESL classes in the U.S. during a six-week period. The first part of the paper, presenting data from five questionnaires of thirty-six students, discusses what they did in class and how they reacted outside of class during each week. The second part discusses the topic from the different perspectives of American ESL teachers, presenting data from interviews, and also discusses the students' adjustments after re-entry to their native culture and the further re-adjustments made by two students from the same group after their later re-entry to the U.S. The conclusion discusses how the students' experiences of cultural adjustment in the ESL classes influenced the students' self-concepts. Finally the last section includes suggestions for future programs.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I have often thought about what learning English means to young Japanese women. My own experience of studying English under Japanese teachers in a Japanese classroom, my experience of being an ESL student and having lived in the U.S. for twelve years, and my experience teaching communicative English in Japan for eight years brought me this question over and over. In Japan, learning English as a second language is compulsory when Japanese students enter junior high school at the age of thirteen. In their second-language classrooms, the emphasis is entirely on grammar and written translation, with little regard to listening and speaking.[1] Students are expected to be passive silent receivers in class and, with rare exceptions, are expected never to ask questions. I have wondered whether or not the process of learning communicative English in the U.S. may provide young Japanese women an awareness of self-assertiveness and sense of empowerment that they are rarely encouraged to have in Japanese society.

In January and February of 1996, I lived in a small suburb of Boston, teaching students from a small women's college in northern Japan as my internship in the Master of Arts in Teaching Program at the School for International Training. They were taking a six-week ESL course at an American college as a part of their Japanese college curriculum.

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[1] Although during the past three years the Japan Ministry of Education has encouraged an increased emphasis on communicative English, the reality is that traditional ways and an exclusive focus on preparing for university entrance examinations have prevented any change.

Many of the students were very nervous but also excited about their new experiences in the U.S. Most of them strongly wanted to learn and improve their English, especially their listening and speaking skills, which are severely limited in the Japanese English education curriculum. The students wanted to listen, speak, and experience real (authentic) English in real situations in the U.S. Many did not believe they could speak English even after having studied it for six years (three years in junior high school and three years in high school).

According to the questionnaire I gave them on the first day of class, some of their thoughts were (quotes from the students' responses, translated from Japanese to English):

"I wonder how much American English I can understand."

"I want to make as many friends as possible."

"I want to learn English, and American culture and customs."

"I think I can enjoy more freedom in the U.S. than in Japan."

"All Americans are kind, cheerful, and friendly."

"American classes have a relaxed atmosphere."

"I am worried about whether I will get used to American food."

"I want to have cross-cultural experiences."

"Teachers in the U.S. are much friendlier than those in Japan."

However, instead of the hope and enthusiasm expressed in these quotes, I saw in class their quiet reactions and behavior, reflecting their Japanese values and customs. I wanted to focus on helping them adapt to the active and positive style and expectations of American ESL classes. They were so accustomed to the Japanese way of classroom participation that, before mastering English, they needed to learn specifically how to perform in an American classroom, and they needed to do it as soon as possible in order to

get the most out of their short stay in the U.S. I saw that the Japanese students needed much more information on American cultural expectations and behavior. As I observed other ESL classes taught by American teachers, I began to realize the huge cultural differences these students were facing. The expectations of the American teachers and those of the Japanese students were indeed very different, and the students needed to understand and adjust to those differences. At the same time American ESL teachers' expectations of Japanese students' behavior in class and their awareness of its cultural determinants might sometimes have benefited from more information about Japanese students' backgrounds.

Most important was that the students were extremely quiet in class. Having no words or signs to show their American teachers what their problems were or what they needed to clarify, they could not fully participate. Some seemed to need repetition or more understandable explanations. Some simply seemed not to know what to do, looking around at their classmates for help. I wondered why they would not just say, "I don't understand," or "Please say that again." They all knew these clarification expressions in English. Yet they did not say a word. One of the students told me later that she felt asking a question or requesting a clarification, especially with her poor English, and while a teacher was talking, would be unbearably rude and embarrassing. She thought it was too selfish to stop the class and take time just for herself. What hindered the students from speaking up in the class were their Japanese values and the customs they had grown up with. They were used to receiving clarifications from a teacher who would notice their non-verbal communication. Therefore they were accustomed just to wait for the teacher's clarifications.

On the other hand, the American ESL teachers were trying to find a

way to communicate or connect with the students, to find out whether or not they understood or whether or not they had questions or whether or not they needed the teachers' repetitions or explanations. This silence of the students puzzled the American teachers and made it more difficult for them to teach what the students needed. The students' silence was due to several important hindrances they faced.

The first is that in Japan students are expected to be passive and not to interrupt a teacher, who is an authority. Students must wait patiently for instruction. To interact with a teacher individually in class, thus to break out of the group, would be highly unusual and culturally inappropriate for a Japanese student. In addition, silence in class is, itself, a very important element in the Japanese educational system, reinforcing the value and importance of silence in all social relationships.

The second hindrance to expression is that women in Japan, especially young women, are expected to be shy and modest and not to express their opinions strongly in front of people. Nobody in the class wanted to be a conspicuous success or failure. This training in silence and passivity, although appropriate for Japanese society, could make an American ESL class a fearful place for the students, at least in the beginning.[2]

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[2] Recently in Japan, change of the educational system has been discussed. Horio (1988, 208, 209) says, "Education came to be thought of as one of the most basic human rights in Japan's postwar constitution as well as in the Japanese Fundamental Law of Education, adopted in 1947...The fundamental difference I want to call attention to here can be formulated in an unresolved antagonism between those who advocate the people's educational authority (*kokumin no kyoikuken*) and those who believe that the organization and management of learning in Japan must be conceived as an exercise of the state's educational authority (*kokka no kyoikuken*)." It is significant that, partly because of the recession in Japan today, Japanese women who pursue higher education in order to seek a career go abroad to Hong Kong, Singapore, or other foreign countries. They go not only to acquire an education but also - since they can't find jobs as equals to men in Japan - to find work and to try life in a place where they can get a chance to be evaluated more fairly than in Japanese offices and society. According to the Immigration Department of the Minister of Justice, in 1994, 22,000 Japanese went to Asia for the purpose of study, 85,000 to North America, and 32,000 to Europe . (*Asahi* , April 6, 1996)

To learn to speak English, these young women needed to go more deeply inside the language, which meant they would have to set aside to some extent the values they grew up with in Japan. In order to participate successfully in an ESL class and master English, the students needed to learn an entirely new set of values. Although young Japanese men are encouraged and, in fact, expected to be independent mentally and financially so that they can support a future family, there is no way, either at home or in school, for a young Japanese woman to consider her own life and values as an individual and to be independent, separated from her family.

Given these circumstances, how can young Japanese women possibly manage such opposite expectations in an American ESL class? I wanted to know what kinds of skills the students could acquire and how these connected with their own self-image. Is it possible for them to practice self-assertion through learning English and the skills of second language acquisition in the U.S.? Is this appropriate for them if they are returning to live in Japan?

My students were eager to speak and experience real-life situations in the English language while in the U.S. They also had very positive and perhaps unrealistic expectations for their six-week stay in the U.S. I felt they would be empowered by gaining knowledge about how to participate in an American ESL class, learning the skills of second language acquisition, experiencing self-assertion, and learning how to express their opinions positively.

My goal was two-fold: (1) to teach my students skills for participating successfully in classes, and (2) to build their confidence by providing them with culturally accurate situations in which they could test new ideas and feel self-assertive. In the following chapters, I will demonstrate how I

identified and developed important skills for my students.

To identify these skills, I collected data including interviews, surveys, and my own journal. The surveys were done five times: on the first day of the six-week course, at the third week, at the fourth week, on the last day of the course, and nine months after re-entry into Japan. The interviews with the students were done during the latter part of the program, and for two students who re-entered the U.S. in March, 1997, a year later. I also interviewed five American ESL teachers who taught the same group as I did. I kept my journal almost every day right after classes. In the journal I described how my class went, why it did or did not go well, and how I thought I could improve my teaching. I wrote about the behavior of some students: which students were active or not active, and why I thought they acted that way. I interviewed the students who were adjusting well and those who were adjusting less well. I observed who gained the skills of speaking English in class and therefore started going out on her own, and who stayed shy and quiet and therefore had fewer real-life experiences outside class. All data, except for my journal, were collected in Japanese for the purpose of acquiring deeper insights from the students. Being able to interview and do surveys in Japanese was a strength. I observed their facial expressions and tried to read and understand the nuances behind their words.

Some of my questions in the surveys were difficult to understand for the students, who were still operating in their teenage mentality, close to their families and protected by their parents. I, too, was brought up in the traditional way, which limited women. However, when I was an ESL student in the U.S., I was 26 years old and the thoughts and consciousness of a young woman 18 or 22 years old are very different from those of a 26-year-old. On the other hand, I too had had doubts and was troubled by cultural limitations,

and my students grew up more recently under circumstances which have made them more equal to men. For example, the 'housekeeping' class in Japanese schools is now taught to both boys and girls instead of only to girls. Women can now be seen drinking alcohol and smoking in public. A wife working outside is accepted and is not an insult to her husband's financial competence. When I first interviewed the students, I failed to consider the generational differences between my upbringing and theirs. However, even with a twenty-five-year age difference between these students and myself, I still saw basic similarities in our awareness of being women in Japanese society. They have been brought up to have the belief that to be a wife and mother is the utmost goal and happiness for a woman. A career is secondary. A woman's future depends on whom she marries. Women are supposed to serve. Women, not men, serve tea. Women are supposed to wash the dishes. Women are to act and speak in a feminine manner. Young women's naiveness and cuteness is still valued in the society. According to an old saying, a woman should walk three steps behind a man (or her husband); one can still see her doing this with her superior, if no longer with her husband. There are still ways women are supposed to act to show good manners.

This paper follows my Japanese students from arrival in the U.S. until their return home. Through their experiences, from interviews with their teachers and from my own journals and reflections, I will investigate how their cultural backgrounds affected their experiences in the U.S.

In Chapter Two, which reports on the first week, I will describe what the students' expectations were, and how the students reacted in American classes. I will describe the skills that I discovered the students needed in order to participate in class. In Chapter Three, the second week, I will describe their expectations regarding the dormitory. In Chapter Four, the third week, I will

tell how some students' individual and independent behavior conflicted with the expectations of their group. In Chapter Five, the fourth week, I will talk about big changes in the students. They became more and more positive and relaxed. The previous weekend of home-stay experiences had been a turning point for them. In Chapter Six, the fifth week, I will talk about a split that occurred between a minority of highly serious students and a majority of less serious, more fun-loving students, and I will discuss how the students needed to learn 'small talk'. In Chapter Seven, the last week, I will summarize the results of the students' self- evaluations of their course work and cultural adjustment. In Chapter Eight, I will describe their re-entry experiences, based on my survey of these same students after they had returned to Japan. In Chapter Nine, I will examine how the two students who came back to the U.S. were adjusting. In Chapter Ten, I will explore the views of American ESL teachers on the subject of Japanese female students. Finally, in Chapter Eleven, I will make suggestions to ESL teachers, describe how I would proceed in another program, and express my thoughts about Japanese women in American ESL programs.

In order to protect the privacy of the people who appear in this study, I have changed the names of all individuals and institutions.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FIRST WEEK

This chapter is about the background of this program and what I learned from my interview with the students on the first day: about their expectations in coming to the U.S., about differences in language-teaching education (especially methodology), about classroom style, and about teacher and student relationships. At the end, I'll discuss the skills I found for the students to practice to overcome cultural differences.

Background Information on the Proctor College ESL program

I taught a class of Japanese female students in a six-week intensive ESL course, part of an exchange program at Proctor College, a small coed liberal arts college in a Boston suburb. The purpose of this program was to assist Japanese students from a small Japanese women's college in improving their English and to help them experience American college life. The course was part of their Japanese college curriculum. A short period of studying abroad as part of the curriculum has been very popular in Japanese colleges and universities. Such a program often attracts the attention of applicants to a college. It was the first such program at this Japanese college.

There were 35 Japanese students, age 18 and 19, and one Korean exchange student who was 22. (She had been studying at the Japanese college for a year, and was well accepted by the Japanese group.) On the day after their arrival, after a placement test they were divided into three groups of twelve

students each. Each group took a three-hour American Communication class in the morning, called "Connected Culture." The course was taught by one of three American ESL teachers and used the textbook entitled Conversational Strategy (Kehe and Kehe 1994) In the afternoon, they took a computer-assisted ESL class, and another ESL class focused on studying and preparing for the field trips, weekend trips, and the four-day American tour after this program. Finally came my class, a synthesizing session which included review of the day's course content, a feedback session from the students, and lessons in trouble-some areas.

I taught American values and customs in three one-hour classes during afternoons from Monday to Thursday, using the textbook called Living in the United States (Hawkinson and Clark 1984). Living on campus, sharing three meals a day with the students in the cafeteria, and traveling with them on weekends gave me chances to observe and know them closely both in and outside of the classroom. I was the only native Japanese ESL teacher. I expected that the students might be disappointed at being taught by a Japanese teacher in the U.S. after coming all the way from Japan to learn English. My experience in Japan has been that Japanese students prefer native English-speaking teachers. Because their concerns were mainly speaking and listening, I assumed that they wanted native English speakers to study with. But contrary to my expectation I was welcomed as a supporter on their side. In addition to my work as a teacher, I served as a liaison between Japanese students and their chaperones, and I listened to the students' problems and feedback about the program inside and outside of classes. This liaison relationship with the students helped me to be closer to them than I would have been simply as a classroom language teacher.

Also, for many of them I seemed to be a role model as a Japanese

woman who was different, for instance, in comparison to their mothers. They were very interested in my private life - why I came to the U.S., what I was doing in the U.S., and how I managed to live here alone.

The First Questionnaire: Students' Expectations

In order to know something of the students' purposes and expectations for the following six weeks, at the end of the first class I asked them to fill out the first questionnaire (Appendix I). From this questionnaire I learned about their motives for coming to the U.S. and their expectations. Most of the students wanted to improve their English and were very interested in American culture. Experiencing authentic, real life in the U.S. seemed to be their main purpose in coming here and the most important thing for them. They also mentioned their method of studying English in Japan, which they felt was not good for acquiring listening and speaking skills. Students with weaker English skills expressed their strong desire for and commitment to improving their English, especially their listening and speaking. They tended to expect that being in the U.S. for six weeks, by itself, could markedly improve their English. Several mentioned the necessity of acquiring English skills for a future career like working in a hotel or travel agency. Many wanted to shop and go sightseeing as much as possible. They wanted to talk to Americans and make friends.

When I asked them to mention one of the most important Japanese cultural values, many answered that taking off the shoes at the entrance hall as one of the big culture differences between Japan and the U.S. In Japan this custom draws a clear border line between indoors and outdoors or between inside and outside groups. The students tried to live in American style but later many told me that not taking off their shoes in their room made it

difficult for them to relax and feel comfortable. It also surprised me that most of the students were having a very difficult time getting used to American food. I had thought they were the generation who grew up with McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and other imported Western food. Not so. They craved Japanese steamed rice and miso soup during the first week, so much that their male chaperon and I bought some ingredients for Japanese cooking when we went to Boston; we cooked and ate some Japanese food with them when we returned to Proctor College. Eventually, however, the students became accustomed to eating cafeteria food.

Classroom Changes

There are big differences between American classrooms and Japanese classrooms. In Japanese classrooms, students are used to being quiet in class. They never say anything until a teacher calls their name, even if they know the answers. There are two reasons for this reticent behavior: being self-assertive and being different from others are frowned upon. Expressing opinions or raising hands stops after elementary school in Japan. From early childhood students are taught, "Don't think only of yourself. A person who thinks only of herself is a selfish and worthless person. Always watch others and keep harmony as a member of a group." This is told them at home and at school repeatedly, and it filters into children's minds gradually and deeply. The person who asserts her/his opinion is selfish, and such behavior is considered childish. When students enter junior high school, home and society make them aware of coming adulthood. They realize that they can not do any more childish things. Japanese children are also reminded to be aware of other people's eyes. Japanese mothers often use other people to discipline their children. When a child does not behave in a bus, a mother

might say, "You'll be scolded by the bus driver." or "You'll be laughed at by everyone in the bus." Clancy (1988, 236) says, "This approach locates the source of disapproval and constraint outside the mother, in society at large. The mothers often emphasized the importance of conformity."

During the first class I did three things to make the students realize they were here in the U.S., in a different culture. In class the first thing I did was to make myself less an authority as a teacher and more equal to the students. They were used to Japanese classroom culture, in which a teacher has all authority and students are only passive receivers. They needed to understand that classroom expectations were different in the U.S. To help them feel the difference, I told my students that they could call me by my first name. In Japan, they would address their teacher as "sensei"(teacher), or in the typical way, use the teacher's last name and add "sensei," or in the polite way use the teacher's last name with the suffix "-san." I wanted them to feel equality with their teacher in class. Some students called me by my first name from that day on. Some called me by my first name with the suffix "-san" indicating respect. I called them by their first names. I tried to treat them as much as possible as equals.

The second thing I did was to change the classroom atmosphere to a more relaxed one. The classroom is a special place in Japan. Although discipline has weakened (recently I have heard that college students often fall asleep or chat in class), still food and drink and chewing gum are not permitted in Japanese classrooms. The students were surprised to see that students can drink coffee or tea in American classrooms. In Japan the class seems to me more a place for teachers teaching instead of students learning. I asked the students to stand up and move around freely in the classroom during activities. This always lessened the students' sense of being in class.

At the same time I tended to mingle among the students so that I was not in a particular place to teach but everywhere to support them. Japanese students like to have a teacher in a smaller group. They tend to question and talk more. I tried to make the classroom less controlled by the teacher. Since they were standing without a pen or notebook, the students could not immediately write down whatever the teacher wrote on the board. When they copied from the board, they paid less or even no attention at all to what the teacher said. During these "student-centered" activities they listened and often learned from each other and created their own conversations .

Thirdly I introduced several simple expressions useful in classrooms, including "Pardon?" "I don't know," "Well...," and "Let's see...," to get them to respond more quickly . The students were quite shy and it took much time for them to respond to my questions. Or they didn't respond at all. I wondered if they were shy because they were speaking English with another Japanese person, but soon I saw that they were as shy with American teachers. There were multiple reasons for the students' silence. If they didn't understand, instead of asking for immediate clarification, they expected the teacher to do the clarification. In Japan, the teacher has authority, and when the teacher speaks, students listen. Asking for quick clarification is not considered necessary or desirable in Japanese classrooms. Rather it is considered too demanding and too lacking in patience. It would be considered impatient not to give the speaker enough time to explain.[3] Also the students are accustomed to being given information without having to

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[3] Patricia Clancy in Language Socialization Across Cultures (Schieffelin and Ochs, ed., 1984: 214-215) "As Azyna et al (1980) have said, verbal expression among the Japanese is 'context dependent, indirect, rich in connotation and evasive in denotation. The basis of this style is a set of cultural values that emphasize *omoiyari* 'empathy'over explicit verbal communication. . . As Ito (1980) points out, verbosity has traditionally been looked down upon in Japan, especially for men; this is revealed in traditional sayings such as *Iwanu ga hana* 'Silence is better than speech'.

request it. I encouraged them to respond as soon as possible because that is the way they do it in the U.S. I often explained to the students that American conversation is like a tennis game. Once a tennis ball is hit to you, you have to return it immediately. Otherwise there would be no tennis game. Since for my past eight years of ESL teaching in Japan this explanation has been well understood by students, I actually pretended that I was moving an invisible ball between two students. The students understood this simple clarification but they didn't know how to apply it to the situation at hand because they simply had no experience in doing so, and in addition immediate, direct clarification is opposed to traditional Japanese communicative style.

Later in the first week, I gave them a greater variety of useful words and sentences which they could use in basic classroom conversation. During the first week, however, I limited the length of these expressions to only a few words, as in those above, which I was sure all the students had heard before and therefore would be able easily to try out.

Ironically toward the end of the week they seemed more relaxed and they were chatting in Japanese and getting a little noisy in class. I felt I needed to find a balance between equality and discipline.

Skill Identification

I could see that the Japanese students needed information and awareness by experiencing what to do and how to participate in an American classroom, as well as in everyday life. I became interested in developing their ability to participate in class during the following six weeks. Because the goal of women's education in Japan has been "Good wife and wise mother" since the start of the Meiji era in 1868, I saw the class as a wonderful chance for

Japanese female students to study the American cultural values of being individual, and independent, and having their own independent opinions in class. They needed to learn how to speak up, ask questions and become aware of themselves as positive learners. I wanted the students to learn the skills that would enable them to become active participants in expressing their own opinions, paying attention not only to the harmony of a group but also to their own individual thoughts and feelings.

I emphasized the following skills in my class:

1. The students had to be aware that they must speak more loudly so that Americans can hear and understand them. The strong belief among the students that their English was simply not good enough was so deep in them that they needed to gain confidence by experiencing communication in real life. When they spoke English, they expected that they would not be understood. But in many cases they were misunderstood not because of their English ability, but because they spoke in voices too quiet to be heard.

2. The students needed to be more aware of how important it was to express quickly either that they understood or that they did not understand what the speaker said. They were used to waiting or pausing silently when they were asked a question instead of giving an immediate clear response. In Japan silence gives both parties a chance to observe each other and to consider what the question really means, or to think how to respond softly without hurting the other's feelings. A long silence might be a sign of reluctance to show a negative response, or a sign of desire to show modesty, the determination not to grab an object or suggestion or invitation as it is. And one needs to make sure whether the question comes from the partner's real will or simply from politeness. Silence in this manner shows consideration to others. However, the silence, which is often a necessary manner in Japan, causes a big problem

in ESL classes. The students have to learn how to respond quickly in order to carry on communication in English. In the U.S. it is not rude, but on the contrary necessary, to respond quickly; silence only invites confusion.

3. When the students had questions, they had to feel comfortable interrupting either a teacher or a classmate. It was necessary to change their passive attitude to positive participation.

Activities to Develop Skills

The students were carrying Japanese customs and values into American ESL classes out of politeness. Once they understood that Japanese customs were not necessarily polite in the U.S. but in fact may even have been causing problems, the students could more easily try new behaviors. I explained why new skills were necessary in American classes, and I repeated several activities so that they could experience and learn these skills.

As one of several activities, during the first five minutes in class as I took attendance I called a student's name and asked her a question, for instance, "How are you?" "Did you like lunch?" or "Did you sleep well?" Each time, if it was necessary, I asked her to speak up. I told them that they had to speak louder; otherwise I couldn't hear them. I continued to use this five-minute greeting as a teaching strategy. Most of the students had never carried on a conversation in English, even one as easy as this. When they didn't know what to say, I responded slowly with a statement about myself, such as: "I got up at seven o'clock this morning. How about you? What time did you get up?" Then the students knew what to say. I avoided writing sentences on the board. I asked them to respond quickly and loudly. I gradually switched to using hand gestures to make the students aware, such as putting my hand to my ear. The students soon self-corrected and spoke

loudly.

For this activity, the important thing was to provide the students with limited vocabulary and sentence structures which they already knew. In this way students could avoid making complicated English sentences by translating from Japanese. I wanted to emphasize having the students respond loudly and promptly. I continued with one grammar point for several questions and then changed to another grammar structure for a while, using for example, the past tense in one instance, the future in another. As a result, the students paid enough attention to responding quickly and more loudly but at the same time could focus on one grammar structure at a time. Later I used this warm-up during the beginning of class as a review and to assess what the students had learned .

I also tried to learn what the students' interests were by noticing when the students' energy rose. In the first week, I learned they were very interested in the practice of tipping. Tipping is not a Japanese custom, so it was a new experience, and they needed to learn how to tip. I talked about waiters and waitresses in the U.S., how much the minimum wage is, how much waiters and waitresses earn from tips, and how they are friendly with customers. When the students practiced restaurant dialogues, I asked them to become the friendliest waitresses possible so that they would earn larger tips. They all laughed and tried very hard.

American currency was another subject where the students' energy picked up. They were very interested in learning how to read prices and count money. I asked them to bring real currency and they very much enjoyed using real currency in their learning activities. I found it important to discover what the students were interested in, what they wanted and needed to know. Otherwise I could not teach them effectively.

I strongly felt the need to explain classroom attitudes in the U.S. to my Japanese students. It was especially important to explain that certain behaviors which seemed natural to students in Japan were taken very differently in the U.S. Although the students might not always do what they were told to do in adjusting to the class, it was necessary for them to know what American teachers expected of them, and to be aware that in the U.S. their silence had a very different meaning from its meaning in Japan. I explained to them that participation in class was as important as performing well on a test and that teachers evaluate and grade as much according to how students speak, ask questions, and voluntarily participate in class, as by how students score on tests. I told them that unless a student voluntarily expresses her opinion, she might not even exist in the mind of her teacher. In their final feedback many of the students wrote how hard they had tried to participate.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SECOND WEEK

The students were facing culture shock in the dormitory. In this chapter I'll discuss their Japanese expectations of dormitory life, and also how the students needed to learn to pay attention to others in public, especially when they were in a group. Also, I'll talk about their visit to an elementary school.

Dormitory Life

During the first and second weeks, the students were very intense and seemed to take everything defensively. They were irritated and frustrated very easily in this new environment, particularly if they felt ignored or left behind by their friends or their group. They were acutely aware who was in whose group during the Boston excursion, or who was in whose room, instead of them.

I saw the students' exhaustion during class. In order to know what was happening to them and since they did not give me any feedback in English, I used Japanese in class for the first time. I was glad that I spoke in Japanese to them, because there followed a burst of expressions of frustration. After they talked for a while, I promised to bring up their requests with the director. They told me it was relaxing and a good feeling to express their feelings and problems freely in Japanese.

All students were under a lot of pressure from living in the dormitory

twenty-four hours a day. Even to tiny things they all overreacted. They were quite upset about their dormitory life. Contrary to their expectations, from the first night of their arrival in the dormitory, they were experiencing culture shock. In Japan a campus dormitory, especially a women's dormitory, is quiet and clean in the Japanese way. Their idea of a women's dormitory was that it was similar to a facility like a business hotel, where someone else would always clean up places like the bathroom or the lobby. Takako said that while she was taking a shower, she heard the voice of a man who probably was visiting his friend in the dormitory and using the toilet, and it made her feel very uncomfortable and insecure. In Japan, a visit from a member of the opposite sex to the dormitory would be unusual and the visitor would be very careful not to disturb other students. (Many women's dormitories in Japan do not allow opposite-sex visits unless the visitors are family members.) Also, in Japan, what a student's visitor does in the dorm is considered her responsibility. She must pay attention to others who live in the dormitory and be careful not to do anything that would damage her relationships with them.

Toilets in Japan

Toilet and bathroom facilities are especially different in Japan as compared to the U.S. None of the toilet doors in Japan are like the ones in the U.S., the bottom and top of which are open. A Japanese toilet door closes completely from the bottom to the top just like a regular room door. Japanese culture treats toilets as the dirtiest of places. Almost all Japanese toilets are separated from the rest of the bathroom, except in Western-style hotels. There are always towels and slippers provided in a toilet to segregate it. In Japan, too, any sound you make in the bathroom is considered embarrassing

and disgraceful, so most young women flush toilets beforehand so that the sound of water covers up any other undesirable ones. This is good Japanese etiquette. In order to save water, I have sometimes seen in Japan an electric sound machine in a women's toilet. This music-box-like device on the wall makes a sound similar to the sound of splashing water. It is called "The Princess of Sound". I doubt if the men's toilets have them. Young women especially do not want to embarrass themselves.

At Proctor College the shower wasn't as clean as the Japanese students expected. Many of them felt strongly that they did not want American students to think that it was Japanese students who left the bathroom dirty. They cleaned thoroughly after they used the bathroom so that they would not be perceived as the ones who made a mess. They said it would disgrace their college and all Japanese women. The students reacting as a group representing their college, and as "we Japanese women," instead of as independent individuals, was cultural.[4]

[4] Condon (1984, 9) says, "In countless ways, both obvious and subtle, the Japanese are encouraged to think first of being part of the group. 'We' always comes before 'I.' *We* of this family, *we* of this nation, or just '*we* ' who are together in a room talking. One is never fully independent; one must always be conscious of others."

Japanese households separate things to use in the kitchen, in the bathroom, in the toilet, and outside. Japanese do not like to mix "inside" and "outside". The outside is dirty in a way different from the way a toilet is dirty. One of my Western friends told me that once in Japan her landlady was annoyed and made a face when my friend went in her bare feet to pick up her mail and then came back into the house without cleaning her feet. She should have wiped her feet with a damp cloth before she came in, or she should have worn outside shoes. In the kitchen, too, things have to be super-clean and even a dish towel for drying and a cloth to wipe the table are always differentiated. When I first saw an American washing her underwear and kitchen towel together, I could not believe it. Things for above and below the waist are strictly separated in Japan. She, and later other Americans, explained to me that since to her the purpose of washing is to clean, she thinks there is no need to separate articles since both are going to be clean afterwards.

The students also felt insecure in the dormitory. They were divided into twos or threes and occupied rooms on different floors. Some American students played very loud music after 10 p.m. and Japanese students went to their rooms and asked that the volume be turned down, but they were ignored. They felt they were ignored because of their poor English. Some students asked me how to show anger and what to say in anger to show their feeling to the American students. When the students were talking about their dormitory again another time, many of them asked me strongly not to report all their complaining to the director since they did not want to make their relationships with American students in the dormitory worse. And later I did hear from regular Japanese students on the campus that the Japanese ESL students complained too much, that they did not understand

American college dormitory life. One of them said that the ESL students always were in a group and stood in a doorway without paying any attention to those passing in and out through the door. I noticed when we were on a field trip in Boston I had to keep telling them not to block the street and to keep one side open for other pedestrians. As members of a group they did not seem to pay attention to others. I happened to ride with two of them on a subway train. Even though there was a lot of space in the train, they stood so close to one passenger seated in a corner that the passenger seemed to be annoyed. I explained the situation to the students; they just were not aware of what they were doing. Altogether the Japanese ESL students experienced much stress from not being able to understand basic American ways and manners.

The Elementary School Visit

During the second week one of three local elementary school visits scheduled during the program took place. The students prepared cultural activities and games to present to the elementary school students. In class, I divided the students into groups of two or three to prepare presentations. They seemed to be excited about meeting American children, whose lovely and cute images they were familiar with from American movies, TV dramas, fashionable clothing magazines and commercial advertisements in Japan. These were the images the students wrote on a sheet of paper on the board, when I asked them to do a brainstorm. They felt like older sisters and wanted to introduce some Japanese games or songs.

Although they had brought the material from Japan, and knew whom they would work with as a group, they did not know how to give instructions for their games and activities in English. I asked them, in a group, to write a

simple lesson plan telling exactly what to say, step by step. They needed to learn simple words of instruction. After they wrote their lesson plan and practiced in their group, each group demonstrated its presentation to the class.

The students seemed to enjoy the school visit. Most of the students were astonished that American children, aged from seven years old to eleven years old, were both self-assertive and very well-mannered when they escorted the Japanese students to lunch. One Japanese student told me later that she noticed that she had to speak much more clearly to children than to adults since adults could guess her meaning more easily. Although the students enjoyed the visit to the school, they did not want to go to another one. They said the visit was physically exhausting and they preferred to do different things during their short stay in the U.S. and not to repeat the same things. Before this visit they had a desire and curiosity to play with and get to know American children but the reality was they could not understand what the children were trying to tell them and this frustrated them. They were in fact not particularly interested in children. At their age, 18 to 19 years old, they found spending more than one hour with children boring and seemed to prefer to be with people of their own age or older.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE THIRD WEEK

In this chapter I will describe how each student was becoming confident in speaking English, how eating out together in a small group affected the students' mood, how students reconciled group consciousness with individual consciousness, and how students needed to learn how to engage in small talk. Also, I asked the students to complete the second questionnaire, in which I asked what in my class made them comfortable and what made them uncomfortable. The students seemed more relaxed and responded to greetings in English everywhere much more casually. Everyday they were experiencing, some as a members of a group and some even alone, confidence speaking English in authentic situations. There were several students who started doing things individually, and their groups had difficulty accepting this.

Becoming Confident, But How?

Michiko, whose English was better than the group average, came to me and told me with a big smile that a sales clerk had understood her and had gift-wrapped her purchase for her friend's birthday. She told me that before this she had been depressed since she could not communicate with Americans. She had needed to learn not only what to say in English but also how to approach people and speak with confidence, overcoming her fear of failure. I wondered how it would be for other students. Many students

needed to have a similar experience to gain confidence during the six weeks. It was a kind of bungee-jumping for them to speak English outside of class. Until they, like Michiko, had authentic experiences communicating successfully outside of class, they would not believe that their English was really good enough. From the very beginning, in order to build their confidence the students needed to be assigned to talk to people outside of class.

Individuality and Being in a Group

Several students started doing things individually, separating from their group. They began to feel that being individual was okay since they were in the U.S. They seemed to enjoy going their own way separately from the group they belonged to. "Being able to speak what I think, without worrying and hesitating over what others might think of me, is a wonderful feeling," said one of the students.

I saw them eating with regular American students or other international students at the cafeteria and going out in the evening together. But some were worried about whether they would be accepted in a group when they went back to Japan. One student, Fusako, told me that when she went to the library without telling her group, later her group came to her and asked her, "Were you mad at us?" "Why?", she replied. "Because you did not wait for us after class and disappeared. We worried about what happened to you." Fusako said unless you belong to a group, you cannot survive in Japan, even if you do not particularly like your group. In school activities you have to be a member of a group, otherwise you are a total stranger without any friends.

Some students still stayed quietly with their friends in a group. These

students seemed to be tied together much more during activities in class. They still spoke very softly, and they helped each other if a member of their group had to respond. I could hear them whispering the answer, and the student whispering back to them to make sure she got the right answer before she answered me.

The Korean exchange student, Jun, who had been in this Japanese college for a year, had a difficult time with the desire to be more individual and independent from her Japanese classmates. She did not belong to a particular group, but the Japanese students felt she belonged to them instead of to the American students on campus, so they did not accept her acting separately from them. The Japanese students expected her to stay in their group. Although she wanted to go out with American college students, she was worried about whether she would continue to be accepted by her Japanese classmates when they went back to Japan. She felt that while she was in the U.S., she preferred to act as an individual Korean. Jun's roommate, Aki, who also was quite independent and did not like to belong to a group, came to me and told me that she worried about Jun's acting separately from the rest of the Japanese group. Aki was Jun's friend in Japan, and had said that both of them were independent and individual in Japan. As a friend, Aki supported Jun's separation from the group, but once when Jun did not stay after class to discuss some matter with classmates, Aki got upset, thinking that Jun was selfish not to consider how she, her friend Aki, was feeling. The rest of the class asked where Jun was and, as a friend, Aki had to defend Jun. Aki felt bad. Individual behavior and assertion of one's own opinions were usually taken as self-centered or egoistic behavior by Japanese classmates.

Let's Eat from the Same Rice Cooker

This is an old Japanese saying: "We became the family-like-group who ate from the same rice cooker." It simply means the members of a group would feel closer to each other after eating together rice or a meal cooked in the same cooker. This saying is often applied to people who live together in a dormitory for a certain period of time.

The students liked leaving the campus for evening activities. There was a shopping mall near the college, and a college shuttle bus was provided, so they often went out in groups to the shopping mall in the evening. They could manage to go to the shopping mall, and they could go to Boston by train because we had gone there together a couple of times, but they were reluctant to go to other places by themselves. One evening I planned to go to a Chinese restaurant with one of the groups, the group of the quietest students. They really wanted to eat out and I wanted to get to know them better. Earlier that day, they wanted to eat out but they were afraid of getting lost; going to the restaurant by themselves seemed to be too difficult. When the time came to go, more students than I expected showed up; other groups wanted to join the adventure. So we all decided to go together.

They had already learned in class how to order in a restaurant. There were eight students, and they seemed hesitant to break the ice and talk to a waitress for the first time. I asked one student, an extremely quiet and shy student sitting next to me, if she could ask the waitress to bring me a glass of water. The first time, she waited too long to jump in and failed when the waitress came to the table. She could not find the right moment to slip her request in. I told her to get the attention of the waitress first by saying, "Excuse me." She failed again since her voice was too low. The third time

she and another student caught the waitress's attention and ordered the glass of water for me. I asked other students to chat with the waitress. The students became more casual and relaxed with me over dinner. Once one student succeeded in chatting, the rest followed. Later in the program many of them mentioned to me that the night of eating out was a good memory.

Another time, I had a dinner with them in an Italian restaurant during a weekend trip to New York. Again I asked them to chat with the waiter. At the beginning, the timing seemed to be difficult for them. But once one student succeeded in chatting, the rest followed. Changing the learning environment from the classroom to another location seemed to relax the students a lot. Especially eating together took away the students' shyness a little. While I was teaching in Japan, I often brought some snacks and had a getting-to-know-you-better party in the classroom, but the students remained shy. At the end of the program with these students in Japan, I took them to a sandwich place, and there they began to relax and talked much more casually. I wonder whether when we went out our relationship of a teacher different from students changed to a relationship of teacher same as students (all knowing each other and eating together in a group, away from the classroom, distinguished from other, stranger people in the restaurant). Also, the students liked to interact with a teacher in a smaller, more personal group. They became more positive and outgoing.

Two Activities in the Class

I did two activities this week which encouraged students to communicate: we practiced quick responses and used the students' group dynamics to encourage more participation in class. I started asking the students to add something to their responses when I asked questions as I took

the roll. For example, when I asked, "Are you going to the movie tonight?" the student might answer, "No, I have to stay and write my journal." I asked each student to respond to my question in two seconds. If they did not know the answer in two seconds, I asked them to ask for clarification, or to say that they did not know. If a student could not respond in two seconds, she would simply say, "Oh, I don't know." Their speed of response became much smoother and more relaxed. This quick response also had a second merit, which was that, due to the short response time, the students had to interact with me directly without help from others.

The other new activity was to use the group dynamics in the class. I noticed when I asked one student to ask a question of another student in the class, she observed other classmates carefully. She looked around and made sure to call on a classmate who might be able to answer. She never called on nervous, insecure classmates, or sleepy, unwilling-to-participate ones, or shy ones. Also when one student was at the board writing something, the rest of the class helped her immediately if she misspelled or did not know a word. All she needed was to turn her head to the rest of the class or just to freeze her hand up in the air so that the class would help her. The students were comfortable working as a group for problem-solving.

This was something on which I could capitalize. I decided to take advantage of this group dynamic. When I needed to do an activity in the whole class after pair work or work they did in small groups of three or four, I called on three students and asked one student among the three to ask a question of a second, and the third one to report a summary of their conversation to the class. In this way the three of them needed to listen and pay attention to each other in order to finish this assignment successfully. After they finished I asked each of the three students to call on another person to replace her in

her role. The rest of the class also attended well in order for members of the group not to fail and cause any trouble to others. I also used this method for checking homework or pair-work practice. The students paid more attention to what was happening in class, and each student had a role to play. After I called on the first three students, I could disappear from the center as a teacher, and observe better. This way also made the students use more clarification in their conversations.

Although from the first class I repeatedly told the students to speak louder, many of them still whispered. Whether or not their English could be understood was often a simple matter of loudness. When I saw that they would not speak up no matter how many times I asked them to, I realized that just telling them what to do achieved nothing. They needed to experience my difficulty hearing their quiet speech. I let the students talk from one side of the classroom to the other side. For example, student A might say, "Do you know what time tonight's party starts?" If student B at the other side of the classroom could not hear her, B had to say, "I didn't hear you. Could you repeat that again?" A would repeat the answer. This activity made them practice clarity and at the same time, made them speak with a louder voice. Even though they noticed that their voices were low, it was difficult for them to raise their voices immediately. They needed to practice this exercise repeatedly. Even with this activity, some students still did not speak up. Yet the rest of class tried hard to be completely quiet to listen to their whispering. I did not expect this.

The Second Questionnaire: What Made the Students Comfortable?

I gave the class the second questionnaire, asking them what in my class made them comfortable and uncomfortable. What made them the most comfortable was that I listened to their problems and complaints. They felt comfortable being with a female Japanese teacher, and being treated as an equal in class. It was necessary for most of them to establish security in class. Some students wrote on their questionnaire that after all I was a woman, and they felt safe with me. And they could always depend on Japanese if they failed to express themselves in English. I spoke English to the students as much as possible, but when the students questioned me in Japanese, I respected their choice of the language and responded in Japanese. When they asked me in English, I answered in English. My race, gender, and friendly disposition made them feel secure with me. Feeling that they could be understood was necessary for them to continue speaking English. In addition, they appreciated learning practical words and sentences. It seemed that many of them were trying out, in other environments, the new words and phrases they had learned in class. Their adjustment to American teachers came more slowly because of their inability to understand what the teacher said and their reluctance to interrupt the teacher and ask, in their weak English, for clarification. In stopping the class, the students could not help feeling guilty toward the teacher and toward the group.

They had discovered that, when they were dining out, shopping, tipping, and handling money, the handy and simple conversational phrases I had taught them were quite useful. Although we had a textbook, the students did not like studying from it, and did not do their reading assignments well. It was necessary for me to check their homework, otherwise they would

not do it. After I told them I was recording their homework submissions, the students started to give me their homework on time.

I did not get many comments on what parts in my teaching made them uncomfortable. Perhaps they wanted to avoid saying negative things to me. Many talked about the classroom furniture, the noise from other classes, and the late (sleepy afternoon) hour of this class. A few mentioned that the assignment I gave them, making a Valentine card, made them uncomfortable, since they were not good at handicraft work.

Since the students were reluctant to give negative feedback, I learned that I needed to itemize what I wanted to know and give them scales on which to respond. For example:

Q. Was my voice loud enough for you?

A. Much too loud - too loud - loud enough - too low - much too low

Q. Did I respond to your questions adequately?

A. Very well - well enough - not enough - inadequate

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FOURTH WEEK

During the third weekend, the students had an American homestay with local families. The homestay was a very significant event for them. Many of them had been looking forward to this and wanted to stay alone with an American family. Although it was just one weekend, they were excited. In this chapter I'll discuss how students showed effects of their homestays. I'll also talk about the students' autonomous response in helping a teacher. And I will summarize the result of a third questionnaire, in which I asked students what they wanted during the second three weeks of the program.

Homestay Experience

The students returned to class from their homestay on the previous weekend with a happy and cheerful attitude. Ever since their arrival in the U.S., they had been anxious to know which homestay family they were going to be with, what they would do, and what the whole experience would be like. Many students requested to be by themselves with an American family. They were worried about whether they could communicate, but they felt more challenged and thrilled to be a single member or visitor in an American family. They were nervous, but wanted to try it out. Their homestay experiences were very positive. They seemed to gain confidence in their English. Except for a few students who did not want to be by themselves with an American homestay, most of them managed to communicate well.

(Though a few were disappointed because their homestay family did not wait long enough for them to try to communicate in English, but instead started trying to speak Japanese to them by using a dictionary.)

Although there were many challenges on the homestay, most students were able to make adjustments and communicate. The example of Akemi shows one challenge. Akemi brought Japanese ingredients from Japan to cook Japanese dishes for her homestay family. She told me that she did not understand her homestay family's negative questions, for instance, "Akemi, don't you like steak?" Akemi answered, "No," by which she meant that she likes steak. She meant to negate the statement, "I don't like steak." In the Japanese language, there exists a word meaning, "Yes, I don't," and a word meaning, "No, I do." That is why a negative question causes trouble. Negative questions always confuse American ESL teachers. When a teacher asks students, "Do you have any questions?" the students answer, "No." The teacher asks again to make sure, "No questions?" All the students say, "Yes!" The students are simply saying, "Yes, you are right," to what the speaker said. Akemi and her homestay family kept asking each other until they communicated clearly.

The students came back with such confidence from their new experiences that I felt this homestay experience had become a turning point for them. The timing of the homestay program was very good. The students were eager, by the time of the homestays, really wanting to learn and speak outside of the class. They were anxious for new experiences, and ready for a close relationship with an American family.

The Third Questionnaire: What Are You Going to Do Now?

The program was now halfway completed. I asked the students to

write down, in either English or Japanese, what they thought they had improved in their English since they arrived here, and what they thought was necessary to further improve their English. I asked these questions because I wanted them to be aware that half of their stay had already passed, and that it was they who could plan and make efforts to improve during the remainder of their stay. Many students wrote that their listening seemed improved, and that their fear of speaking English was much diminished. Many students wrote that they needed to speak more English with other people on campus and, some added, even among their classmates. Some were aware of their weaknesses in particular grammatical points or pronunciation.

Teach Them Not Only What to Say But Also How to Say It.

Although the students were aware that it was necessary and important to speak more English, they seemed unable to find a chance to speak with other American students on campus. I started to assign them the task of interviewing people on campus. For example, as Valentine's Day was approaching, I gave them questions to ask American students:

"What do you want to give as a Valentine gift?"

"To whom do you want to send a Valentine card?"

"From whom do you want to receive a Valentine ?"

Later that evening in the cafeteria, I saw that they were asking American students those questions. The students each had a piece of paper with the questions written on it. Yet some of them hesitated, taking a long time to get on their feet to ask the questions. They seemed to need a lot of encouragement to talk to the American students. At dinner, the students who were eating with me told me that they wanted to try the interview but

they did not know to whom they should go. I told them to find someone alone or with one other person at a table, since some of the American students sat in larger groups and my students would be overwhelmed and become too nervous to talk to them. Two of my students saw a pair of students several tables away and asked me if those students might be willing to talk. I told them to try and find out. I encouraged them to speak loudly and to smile. They did not want to go alone, one by one, so two of them stood up and moved to the table slowly. They turned toward me when they were almost at the table. I gave them the gesture to go ahead. They started talking to the American students. They were there for five minutes or so. When they came back, they told me that the American students were very friendly, and they had gotten their assignment done. I wondered what they would have done if the American students had not been so friendly or did not have time. My students needed to be ready for rejection or for other possible responses, too. They needed more preparation than I had thought.

During the next class, I asked the students the results of their interviews. They said they liked this activity because they had the responsibility to move beyond cultural barriers in order to complete their homework. Also the students were more interested because they had some background experience about this holiday. Valentine's Day was introduced into Japan for commercial purposes by a Japanese chocolate company. It is the day women(not men) buy chocolate and present it to their Valentines. This present-giving is often used to confess secret love to a person. This custom has been very popular for generations, because it is a special time unlike any other in Japan, when women can confess true romantic feeling to men. Because of empathy toward the men who do not get any chocolate, a woman tends to buy a lot of chocolate for her male friends, colleagues, and boss in her

office or school. These chocolates are called "*Giri Choco*"; "*Giri*" means [Obligation, a debt of gratitude, a sense of honor] (Davidson 1993: 290) "*Choco*" means chocolate.

The Students' Autonomy

In the middle of the fourth week the students asked me to help with the preparation of a Japanese song that they were going to sing during the farewell party. I accepted their request with one condition, that they spoke English. The song, which was popular among them was a Japanese pop song about graduation. They had asked their school in Japan to fax them the lyrics. I divided the lyrics, one line to each pair of students, and had them translate it. I circulated through the class to help. When they finished the translation, I asked each pair to read their line in both Japanese and English. After they had all presented their translations they sang the whole song in Japanese. I taped and played it for them. Despite my encouragement they were willing to sing in English only the last line.

The following day I happened to observe their class with an American teacher. When the teacher and the students were about to start practicing the Japanese graduation song, the teacher asked them if they could help him to understand the meaning of the lyrics. Surprisingly the students voluntarily started presenting the translation that they did in my class. When the teacher mispronounced some words in a line, the students in charge of the translation of that line corrected him without any hesitation, as if it was their responsibility. The teacher had ceded authority. The students were voluntarily telling the teacher how a word was pronounced or what a word or line meant in English.

How did it happen? A memory came to my mind of a class a couple

weeks before, in which the same students were quiet and looked at each others' faces, puzzled when the teacher asked a question. He had to call on a student to get a response. I was amazed at the students' autonomous reaction. They liked helping and acted positively when they each had a role to play that they understood well. Helping the teacher made the students very active in class. Later they all without hesitation sang the song, in English.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FIFTH WEEK

A Minority of Serious Students in Class

A split occurred between a minority of highly serious students and a majority of less serious, more fun-loving students. Chieko, who was a good, serious student, told me that she was disappointed that her classmates were not willing to study hard. She felt that it was difficult for her to ask questions or show her eagerness to study in class. She said if she showed her enthusiasm for studying she would become conspicuous in the group. She remained quiet since she was worried how she would get along in the group when they went back to school in Japan. Chieko asked me not to listen to the majority of the class who requested less homework and a slower class, because there were a few students there who really wanted to study harder but could not raise their voices. I had taken the majority's request as a positive sign. Instead of being quiet, the majority of the students spoke up and said what they wanted to do in class.

I was glad that she came and talked to me. In my class, I noticed that most of the students preferred chatting or doing easy tasks, games, and activities rather than working hard. I learned that even if the majority of the class suggested or requested something, I knew that I should always pay attention to the minority in class, because they would never say what they thought in front of the majority. I learned I needed occasionally to ask all the students to write down anonymously their opinions or ideas about the class.

This way I could hear the true opinions of minorities in the class, especially the ones who wanted to study more.

Megu also visited me and told me that she had changed since she came to the U.S. She had not belonged to a small group in Japan because she knew that once she entered a group, she could not get out. She did not like hanging out with the same people. According to her, everyone in the class had recently changed. One student had gone off alone to the library without telling her group. This had never happened before in Japan, where everybody moved together to the bathroom or the cafeteria or the library or the shopping mall. If you were asked to join any activity in a group, you would go. You would not say "No." Because soon nobody would ask you to join them.

The Necessity of Small Talk Practice

Most of the assignments I prepared for this week, another set of questions to ask Americans, were planned to encourage students to act individually. The purpose of the assignments was to encourage small talk. A Japanese person rarely talks to a stranger in a public place or at a party unless she is introduced. If you approach someone whom you do not know, you are considered a little unusual. In Japan conversation always begins from superior position to inferior position, or from man to woman . I introduced ways to approach people with small talk:

"Excuse me, what time is it?"

"Excuse me," (looking at the T-shirt a person is wearing) "have you been to California?"

In other words, I introduced varieties of ice-breakers. In Japan people who sit in the train face-to-face with knees just one foot apart usually do not

speak, even during a three-hour ride. It is not uncomfortable for Japanese not to talk in this situation. By Japanese standards, in the U.S. there is a flood of small talk, which is considered by Americans to be good social manners.

For ordinary Japanese people there are not as many dinner gatherings or parties as there are in the U.S. Because of the smaller size of Japanese houses, a gathering or a party is not common at home. Often a house guest does not mingle with all the family members. The guest is usually invited to the guest room or the living room. The guest talks only to his/her friend, a particular member of the family. For example, if the guest is the father's guest, the guest talks only to father. If there are children, the parents might introduce them to the guest, but much socialization is not expected from the children except bowing and simple greeting. Children, age five or younger, would probably hide behind the parents. Japanese parents encourage their children to greet properly, but they do not expect the children to carry this out. Children are shy, which is considered fine, not a bad quality. Children's participation in conversation among adults is often unwelcome. On the contrary, it is considered rude if children join or interrupt adult conversation. The other members of the family are not invited to join unless the guest is known to the family. If the guest is the children's, they talk and eat by themselves in either the children's room or in the living room. In all cases the Mother plays the role of server, bringing drinks or food and moving back and forth between the kitchen and the living room. She does not sit down with guests unless the guests are hers.

When do Japanese youngsters start practicing small talk with their family's guests? Some parents teach only the bowing and greetings expected when the guest arrives and leaves. The parents do not expect even their college-age children to join their guest's conversation. If their children stay

and chat with their guest, the guest may think the children have not the manners to leave them alone. Also, social relationships seem to be limited to associations among members of similar age and sex groups.

Necessity Makes Them Talk

One day Chiyoko, who was very shy and still whispered in class, came to me before class and asked me to teach her how to get a refund for some merchandise she had bought. She explained to me what she wanted to do, and we made sentences together. Since she really wanted to obtain the refund by the time she left the college the following week, she was eager to know exactly what to say. I was very interested in her enthusiasm. She finally needed to speak English in her own words. Later I asked her if it went okay. She smiled and told me it did. Shopping is the students' favorite subject. It might be interesting to assign the students to buy things and then return or exchange them, or ask for them to be gift-wrapped.

Authentic Materials

I brought housing-for-rent advertisements to class, with the list of relevant vocabulary words. The students were very interested. Some of them were living off campus in Japan, and they compared rent and other details. I asked them to choose two possible apartments they were interested in renting. First I thought it would be too difficult for the lower level students but their interest was strong and they got into it. The necessary vocabulary was introduced at the beginning and they started looking in pairs for an ideal apartment for themselves. I circulated through the class to answer their questions. When their questions were useful to share, I went to the blackboard and wrote the new vocabulary or sentence and interrupted the

class and explained. There were many questions because of big differences in apartments of the two countries. For example, renting an apartment in Japan requires a huge amount of key money (e.g., $3,000) in advance and a tenant might get back half or nothing of it when she moves out. This system differs depending on the area in Japan but it does make people hesitate to move in or out. Also, it is very rare for a Japanese apartment to be furnished. It never comes with a refrigerator, a stove, or an oven. A tenant has to provide all of these.

Clear Task

I often divided the class into pairs to have the students do activities. However, working in pairs they tended to speak Japanese. When I gave them really clear tasks, the students spoke English and the activity was successful. When the tasks were not clear, they tended to check each other in Japanese instead of asking me. I gave to each pair of students index cards on which parts of an address were written, and they had to figure out how to order the cards correctly so they made sense. I got them to work in pairs, using English such as: "What is this?" "I think it is ..." "Let me ask the teacher," "Could I borrow your eraser?" "Would you mind if I use your pencil?" "Here you go." I encouraged them to use simple conversation while doing this task. They had to talk to each other. I found ways to sneak in and challenge them to use English.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE LAST WEEK

Everyone was sad because soon they would have to separate from their familiar ESL teachers and American friends and go back to Japan. The separation seemed difficult for them. Some students had become really attached to the people on campus and to life in the U.S. This week they came to my class weeping. They told me some teachers cared for them so much. As evidence of this the students said the teachers told them how to study even after they went back to Japan, and they were overwhelmed by their teachers' warmheartedness.

In this chapter I will talk about the last questionnaire (Appendix IV) I asked the students to answer: their evaluation of themselves in relation to the course work and to the cultural adjustments they made during their stay. I also asked them what adjustments they thought they would need to make if they would stay longer.

The Students' Self-Evaluation in Relation to Course Work

The students wrote that they had made not a only big improvement in their English but also had gained deep insight about themselves, their lives, and their futures. In the self-evaluation of course work, students said that they never studied as hard as in this course, or that this was the first time they had to study hard since college entrance examinations. Improvement in listening and speaking was mentioned by most of the students. Their fear or

hesitation to speak with Americans had become much less, some students wrote. A few students who remained quiet said that they knew they had to speak up, but they tried hard to do what they could. They regretted that they had not been as positive in class as they should have been.

The Students' Self-evaluation in Relation to Cultural Adjustments

Adjustment 1: Daily Manners and Greetings

The students wrote much more about their cultural adjustments than about the class. I'll talk about three adjustments which were mentioned by the majority of the students. The first adjustment they made was in their daily manners and greetings, which they thought had become friendly and casual. They said that they tried to pay attention to others in public places; this was different from their expectations of themselves in Japan. All the time Japanese people worry what others think of them. In the U.S., many people pay attention to others, but it is a warm consideration, like holding the door for the next person, or by being sociable and friendly by greeting - saying "Hi" or "Hello" - the people on campus or the people whom they don't know well, or expressing appreciation by saying, "Thank you," with a smile, even for trifling things. They wrote that greeting seemed to be both an important and a pleasant thing to do. They wrote that there was little vertical social relationship, but rather friendliness, in the U.S. In Japan nobody holds the door for you unless you are in a superior position, and nobody greets you casually and in a friendly way. The greeting depends entirely on the distinctions of hierarchical relationship.

Adjustment 2: One's Own Opinion

As a second adjustment, the students tried to have their own opinions. Being asked all the time, "What do you think?" or "What would you like?" or "How do you like...?", they started thinking and seeking answers, responding with sentences beginning, "I think...," or "I like..." When they were asked their opinions, they often noticed a blank in their minds. I had often heard my colleagues from other countries complain that Japanese people did not seem to have their own opinions. Even when they have desires, Japanese people hesitate to express what they think or what they want directly and immediately. For example, if an American asked a Japanese person what she wanted to eat, before the Japanese person thought of what she really wanted to eat, she would think about what her partner wanted to eat. She would answer, "What about you?" or "Anything is fine." This is the Japanese way of showing politeness.

The students started thinking what their opinions were, and thought of what having their own opinions meant. Many of them wrote that it was important to have and insist on their own opinions and judgments. Akiko was so glad to make this stay an opportunity to rethink her life, to discover what she wanted to do. She began not to feel guilty about self-centered thoughts. She felt like her personality became stronger. She also realized how important it was to her to have her own opinions and feelings without hesitation and without worrying how others might think of her.

Adjustment 3: Being Outgoing

As a third adjustment, the students felt themselves become more positive and responsible for themselves. They became unafraid of making a

American women seemed more flexible and freer than Japanese. The students valued being positive and outgoing. Kyoko wrote that she needed to express her own opinion not as one of her group, and speak louder and positively. She continued that if she had something to complain of or to ask, she should speak out. To her, Americans seemed individually to have their own style in their behavior, thoughts, and appearance; they didn't go anywhere just because their friends went, as she did.

Fusako said that she started saying "Thank you"("*Arigato*"), instead of "Sorry"("*Sumimasen*"), which in Japan can be used both for apology and for appreciation. When it is used for appreciation, there is a meaning of humbly apologizing for causing trouble for a person who does something for you.

feeling of being ignored or unable to establish friendly relationships with Americans. Unfortunately some of them blamed themselves even further and lost confidence in their personalities.

The Easiest Adjustments

The students found some adjustments easier. They had become accustomed to eating American food and wearing shoes all the time. Easiest to adjust to was that they were not interfered with in their campus life. They said it was freer than that of Japan. They also mentioned freedom from Japanese customs which pertained only to women, such as "feminine" ways of sitting, talking, and paying attention to appearance. Women in Japan are supposed to sit with the knees closed, talk in a lower voice, cover their mouths when they laugh and not show the inside of their mouths too much when they speak, and maintain a neat, clean, and fashionable appearance. For example, sitting on the floor or couch with legs crossed was accepted here, but was considered bad manners for a woman in Japan. They appreciated the absence of other people's eyes censoring how they should look and how they should behave.

Adjustments the Students Thought They Would Have to Make If They Stayed Longer

The students wrote that, if they had stayed longer in the U.S., they would have had to adjust further. They wrote that they would need to have more responsibility for themselves, to express and insist on their own opinions and judgments, and express "Yes" and "No" more clearly. Many students mentioned that it would be necessary to become more independent and individual, to become less dependent on the group. They observed that

mistake when they spoke English and worried less how others thought of them. Some students came to be able to ask questions, listen to others, and concentrate much more in the class.

They thought it important to convey their own opinion clearly and not to depend on others. They wanted to be more independent and individualistic, not to belong to a group all the time. Some of the students thought they found new possibilities and openings in themselves and in their futures. Some thought they were better able to observe themselves objectively and thought how narrow-minded they had been.

The Most Difficult Adjustments

Dormitory life and relationships with American students remained difficult for some. The students said the most difficult thing for them to adjust to was the inability to take a bath; there were only showers in the dormitory. It was difficult for them to adjust to having to take a shower instead of the warm, relaxing, replenishing "*ofro*", the Japanese bath they were used to. Taking a hot bath is a special treat and a way of relaxing in Japan. Young and old people go to hotsprings for leisure. The people who survived the Kobe earthquake in 1995 and those who were released from the Japanese embassy in Peru in 1997 told a media interviewer the first thing they wanted to do was to take a hot bath. It is common to offer a hot bath immediately when a guest arrives at a Japanese house, especially if they have come a long distance or will be staying as a house guest. For some cultures, this might be taken as an offensive offer, a hint that a guest smells bad.

Some students said that to say "No" was difficult because they were so used to leaving things ambiguous. Some students could not say "No," as they wanted to be friendly. Some students blamed their poor English for their

CHAPTER EIGHT

RE-ENTRY TO JAPAN

When I went back to Japan in December, 1996, I mailed to the ESL students I had taught in America written questionnaires on their experiences re-entering Japan. The questionnaires queried them about what, returning to Japan, they noticed in their Japanese culture and in themselves as compared to their experiences of themselves and American culture in the U.S. I sent these questionnaires in Japanese to the students and I translated their replies into English. The questionnaires, translated into English, constitute Appendix V.

What the Students Noticed in Their Japanese Culture

I opened the questionnaire by asking them what they first wanted to do upon their return to Japan. On the fourth questionnaires I had given in the U.S., the students answered that not being able to take a bath was the most difficult thing to adjust to in the U.S. And in fact what they all wanted to do first when they went back to Japan was to take a bath.

Ladies First vs. Seniors First

I next asked what they noticed in Japan that they had not noticed before they went to the U.S. Many of the students mentioned the lack of "Ladies First" manners in Japan. For Japanese women in America the first experience of "Ladies First" is pleasantly shocking. At the beginning of their stay the ESL

students did not know how to react to this experience. They were accustomed to the very strict traditional position of man and woman in Japanese society. Japanese men do not have a "Ladies First" manner; they have a "Men First" manner. If a Japanese man practices "Ladies First," he is considered either subordinate to the woman with him or "*Amerika kabure*" (literally : "American infection"). The traditional Japanese saying is, "Man respected, woman despised."

The students also felt that on the whole people in the U.S. were kinder and had more consideration towards others than did people in Japan. When Nobuko first arrived at the airport in the U.S., she was immediately helped by several Americans. In contrast, in Japan she said that when she rode on the train on the way home, nobody in the train or at the train station offered to help carry her heavy luggage. She thought people looked with annoyance at her and her big suitcase taking up public space. When Hiroko arrived at Narita (Tokyo) airport, she noticed people bumping into each other without apologizing and a middle-aged Japanese group cutting into the line. Quite a few students talked about the differences in manners of the two countries. They felt that Japanese men lacked manners, generosity, and gentlemanliness and in general wrote that there was coldness in Japanese society. Some students stated that Japanese people seemed unable to be friendly and seemed to keep a certain distance from people, especially when they first met. People in Japan seemed to communicate much less than people in the U.S. To Aya Japanese people seemed to be formal; on the other hand Americans seemed frank and friendly. Aya also observed that Japanese people do not value taking risks, but she thought risk-taking in itself has a positive value.

Some felt difficulty in communicating with their seniors or people in higher social positions. Speaking freely and expressing what they believed to

a senior or person in a higher position was okay in the U.S., but was considered bad manners in Japan. Masa wrote of her recent experience at her part-time job. She offered her opinion, since she thought that with her idea things would work better for everyone. She was told that she was not supposed to suggest anything since her position was only part-time. Moreover nobody had asked her opinion. The other employees there thought her selfish to suggest her own opinion and they made faces. She wrote that she only wanted to be helpful but later she felt she had been mistreated.

Individual Changes: Some Might Not Fit in Japan

I asked students how they felt they had changed in the U.S., and which changes did not fit in Japan. In the U.S., Takako wrote, she was self-assertive and said what she wanted to say clearly, which she ironically thought might have been due to her limited English vocabulary and lack of skills for indirect expression in English. After she went back to Japan, she became able again to speak less assertively. She again tended to pay close attention to others when she spoke, so she could perceive in their verbal and physical responses what their needs and desires were, and accordingly adjust her speech. She thought Japanese nuance was particularly delicate and varied.

Some students wrote that they began to think more about themselves, what they thought and felt and what they wanted to do and wear. They thought everyone should have an individual style in clothing. They preferred to wear what they wanted to wear, and felt that Japanese were too influenced by the current popular fashion and tended to wear the same fashionable clothes and have the same hair style.

Akemi wrote, "I wasn't afraid of making mistakes. I challenged many

things. I gained more possibilities for myself from this trip. I could do anything alone, and talk to a person easily whom I don't know well. I didn't have to pay too much attention if they are older or younger than me and could use first names with each other."

Emi noticed her personality had been influenced by being a typical oldest child in a Japanese family. The oldest child is supposed to have the biggest responsibility in her family, and not depend on others. She noticed this after she was away from home.

Kimiko came to want to have her own personality, to be herself and find things only she could do. She used to think of herself as passive and only able to enjoy being entertained by others. But now she believes that it is only she herself who can entertain herself. Also she stopped judging people by appearances. She came to believe that if she made efforts, she could "make it." Other students also wrote that they believed that if they wanted to, they could do anything. It's up to you in the U.S. - but not in Japan.

Takako wrote, "I saw different attitudes in myself after I returned to Japan. I was more open and direct in the U.S. I was told in the U.S. that I was not accepted *unless* I had my own opinion and strong will; on the other hand, in Japan those who spoke anything clearly were not accepted in the society." Some students wrote that they could act independently from their group and get together with those whom they really liked. There seemed to be no superficial relationship. They were also aware that at work in Japan, they could not work continuously unless they considered harmony at work instead of individuality.

Differences the Students Noticed

Some students described differences in classrooms in the U.S. and

Japan. The class procedures and the relationships between teachers and students were different. There is a distance between teacher and students in Japan. Japanese classes are passive; students listen but rarely speak to the teacher. In American classes students were relaxed (it was okay to drink a soda during class), but in Japanese classes they were not. Kimiko thought that, in a Japanese class, students would not be able to acquire skills to express their own opinions. In an American class she used to ask questions, but now in Japan if she spoke up she would be discriminated against and criticized for "showing off ." The Japanese ESL students were shocked at the openness of American teachers in front of the students. American teachers occasionally brought their spouses or girlfriends and showed affection; this never happened in Japan. Japanese teachers separate private life from public life.

In the U.S., some came to believe, you can make it if you make the effort, and this was not true in Japan, where sex and educational background are heavily considered.

When I had asked them in the first class about the differences between the two cultures, American and Japanese, they had described taking off shoes at the entrance of a house. Now they wrote on a much wider range of differences. Maki wrote, "How to say 'Yes' or 'No' is different. Clear 'Yes' and 'No' are necessary in the U.S., undesirable in Japan. In the U.S., individual personality is respected and you can do what you want to do, but it is very different in Japan, where self-assertion and selfishness are considered identical. Doing the same as others has value in Japan, and if you do things a little differently from others, you are criticized.

The students liked the way Americans entertained their house guests, and they especially enjoyed visiting their teachers' homes and their homestay families. They felt that Americans' way of thinking was more positive than

Japanese people's. Americans didn't seem to interfere or criticize others. Many students were told by their friends and family that they had changed since being in the U.S. They became outgoing and their thinking became positive and stronger. Megu wrote, "My way of thinking seemed to become freer. I began to insist more on my own thoughts. I came to be able to say what I want to say with confidence. I tend to see negative parts of Japan and Japanese and to be a stronger critic." Some students were told that they expressed their emotions more clearly. Some were told that they had become mature. Some thought they began to see things more objectively and express their opinions more than before. One used to be the type to go out with her friends all the time, but after she returned she began to go out by herself and to try to do things by herself. Some used to worry about getting a job after graduation but after being in the U.S. began to think "there must be another way." The students felt that in class everyone spoke their own opinions freely since being in the U.S. Some began to talk to classmates who were not in their group.

Individual Changes Grow

Many students showed interest in coming back to the U.S. in order to test their abilities and to learn to be more independent. They also mentioned American values and customs, such as not interfering in others' private affairs and the values of positiveness and risk-taking. They felt they were more positive in the U.S. One student stated that in the U.S., she liked that she was not afraid of failing, she challenged herself all the time, and she conquered the fear of failing. She did not feel the many inferiorities she used to feel, or anxiety and fear of failing, as she did in Japan. Every day she was content and there were always new things to see. She realized what was

important to her.

At the end of the questionnaire, I asked the students to advise Japanese women who are thinking about going to the U.S. The students' comments included the following:

"Forget the things that you can not do because you are a woman of Japan, and remember that you are a woman of the world."

"It's important to have objectives and confidence."

"Don't hesitate or be too modest(*enryo*)."

"Keep your own opinion, but also behave well."

"It's important to have someone supportive whom you can talk to, but also you have to be able to be alone."

"Speaking, writing and reading in English all the time makes you really tired until you are used to it, so it's necessary to relax once in a while."

"Being sociable and outgoing is a key to enjoying and relaxing with Americans."

"Speak as much as you can."

"Express clearly what you like and don't; otherwise, Americans will tease or fool you or won't understand what you really want."

CHAPTER NINE

RE-ENTRY TO THE U.S.

I had a chance to interview two students, Eiko and Kyoko, who had been in the six-week ESL program and had come back to Proctor College in Fall 1996 as exchange students for another year. I was interested in knowing how they were doing in both regular classes and the ESL classes, and how their second stay in the U.S. differed from their first. I asked the same questions I had asked them the previous year to see if there were any differences. The interview was done in Japanese with the two students together. I taped the interview with their permission.

I asked if they felt that their styles of class participation had changed, what the differences were this time in comparison to last time they were here, and what they felt comfortable or uncomfortable with in the U.S. on this visit.

How Have You Been Participating Differently in American Class?

Both students felt comfortable participating and asking questions in the ESL class, as all the students there were on the same level. Kyoko said, "In ESL class, I feel more comfortable than I do in the regular class, since I am recognized as an international student and the teacher seems to try to understand us more. In ESL class there are two kinds of students: those who express their opinion freely and those who don't. I say anything I want to. We all are here to study English so we all are very aggressive as far as

speaking up. Even if the whole group were quiet, I would express my opinion anyway; otherwise, it wouldn't be a class."

In the regular classes with American students, however, they listened to other students' questions, and they could not ask any questions. Eiko said, "I don't feel I am following the class. I need to review what I learned in the class afterward in order to understand. I would prefer individually to ask the professor questions after class. I can understand a Japanese lecture without concentrating, but in English, it's impossible unless I concentrate. In the U.S. we've been trying so hard to follow the classes. There is no test in Japan until the end of the term. The students don't study until the final test; here in the U.S. every two weeks there is a test."

Are There Differences in Your Reasons for Coming This Time to the U.S. in Comparison to the Last Time You Came?

Eiko told me, "My purpose in coming here is to work for a foreign airline. I thought that with only a certificate from my junior college I would not be able to get a job. I did not have confidence in myself. I needed to get a year-abroad experience studying English. I wanted to do job hunting with confidence in myself."

The other student, Kyoko, has wanted to study abroad since high school. After going back to Japan at the end of the 6-week stay at Proctor College, she heard that there was a scholarship for an exchange program at the same college for a year. She applied and was accepted. She had wanted to study hotel management, a subject which, in Japan, is only available at a vocational school. Since she was to graduate from junior college a year later, she hesitated to go back to a vocational school, where she would be studying along with recent high school graduates. She came here to study not only

hotel management but also English.

About What Do You Feel Comfortable in the U.S.?

Eiko said, "I don't have to worry about how others might think of me. In Japan, there are certain social rules of behavior which everyone must follow, especially women. For example, even tiny things, like in the library you have to sit a certain way. In the U.S. people don't seem to care about other peoples' opinions so much. In the U.S., there are not certain expectations for young women to behave in a certain way. I do feel relaxed and freer than in Japan. People don't interfere."

Kyoko said, "I feel more comfortable in the U.S. than in Japan. I can be myself more and I don't have to pretend to be someone the society or other people think I should be. I feel relaxed. In Japan, I worry about how others think of me, but here I pay more attention to my own life. I do my own things and I don't waste energy responding to how others might think of me. I'm a little worried about what will happen when I go back to Japan. I realize I have forgotten some polite Japanese when I talk to my superior. I might have a hard time at job interviews or at part-time jobs if I can't use polite Japanese in the right way. I feel funny when I speak polite Japanese."

About What Do You Feel Uncomfortable in the U.S.?

Eiko said, "Since I began my stay at Proctor College, I haven't gotten enough news about the world outside of this college. If I were in Boston, I could get a Japanese newspaper or magazine to see what was happening in the world. Here, I don't even have time to read an American newspaper or magazine or watch TV."

Kyoko told me, "I don't think I feel inferior around Americans, but

being with Americans I am painfully aware of my inability to speak proper English. Some professors' attitudes have been different toward me. I was told that one professor, whom I am taking a class from, disliked Japanese students. He does not call on Japanese students as much. When I speak to him individually, he treats me well, answering my questions. I have heard that there are other professors who dislike Japanese students because Japanese students do not ask questions in class, but get high grades on the test. In Japan, the test grade is the most important thing. I can't ask questions in class because of my poor English. When I have a question, I ask international students."

Eiko said, "I feel uncomfortable being silent with my American roommate so I try to make small talk. However, I don't feel uncomfortable with silence with Japanese people. Since I came back here, I began to talk and be more sociable with Americans so that I can ask them for help in the future if it should be necessary."

Kyoko said that her awareness of hygiene was changed, "I used to wipe a toilet seat before use, but now I can sit even without a toilet seat cover there. Americans don't always wash their hands after using the toilet."

Kyoko said, "I feel I'm living well, every day thinking much more deeply than I did in Japan. I used to spend a lot of time watching TV there. But here I learned how to use my time more effectively. I always think about why I am here in the U.S. I have begun to think more than before. I have gained confidence. Now I can think of getting a job as a next step. It is the fact that I am studying in the U.S., which is several times harder than studying in Japan. It is a really good feeling. I feel the need to study here. Although I have more opportunities to speak English, I still speak Japanese with my Japanese friends. When I came here last year, I wasn't confident speaking

English and I hated speaking English. I realized I had to speak English. When I tried to speak once and an American asked, 'Huh?' for clarification, it shocked and discouraged me. 'Huh?' to me was a sign of being disgusted and annoyed, although it might mean nothing for Americans. For me, I felt such shock and fear that I could not ask again. I used to get hurt by trifling things. Now I feel fine and can repeat if s/he doesn't understand me and asks me, 'Huh?' I can say, 'OK! You did not get it. I will repeat it as many times as you want until you get it.' I feel that I have become rude. I worry about what will happen when I go back to Japan. Japanese might think I am rude."

Both of them seemed to be comfortable with their changes and their adjustments to American values, with being released from Japanese customs, such as expectations of how women, especially young women, should be. At the same time, they worried about being too assertive or aggressive to return to and fit into the Japanese society. However the confidence they felt was the result of their assertive way of life in a foreign country. They may have to readjust to customs and values in Japan, but their confidence in themselves will remain with them, as well as newfound strength to overcome any difficulties they might face in the future.

CHAPTER TEN

VIEW FROM ESL TEACHERS

Until now, drawing on my surveys and observations, I have been discussing the students' feelings and points of view. I have analyzed them using my own experiences as an ESL student in the U.S. and as an ESL teacher in Japan and the U.S. I also wanted to understand the points of view of American ESL teachers, so I interviewed the four American ESL teachers of the same class I had taught and observed, plus the American director of the ESL program. I also interviewed the supervisor of my internship from the School for International Training. To protect the anonymity of the interview subjects I refer to them as Teachers A, B, C, and D.

Three teachers (A, B, C) taught three-hour American communication classes, called "Connected Culture," using the textbook entitled Communicative Strategy (Kehe and Kehe 1994). The teachers taught functional grammar, vocabulary, slang, and American customs. Teacher A had previously taught multi-cultural classes. Teacher B had ten years of ESL experience in single and multi-cultural classes. Teacher C had little background with Japanese students. It was the first time she had taught Japanese students and her first time back in a classroom after a hiatus of a number of years. Teacher D had had some experience with Japan and its people. The program director (referred to in Appendix VI as "E") had taught at a women's college in Japan and had taught single and multi-cultural ESL classes in the U.S. Her knowledge of Japanese culture was substantial.

I submitted the same list of questions to each person I interviewed. The interviews were conducted in English and recorded with the interviewees' permission. The complete transcript of the interviews constitutes Appendix VI and is included with the permission of the people interviewed. The complete transcripts themselves are a rich source of detail, story, and reflection, and I urge the reader to consult them directly. The following is a summary of the teachers' comments and observations.

Pedagogical Expectations and Preparation

I first asked the teachers about their pedagogical expectations and preparation for teaching their ESL classes. The program director said, "This program was an experientially-based language program; the students were encouraged to integrate their applied knowledge of English into various contexts or situations." "My expectation is, try to get them away from using a book and be communicative in their speaking with someone."[Teacher A] "My expectation was not high for any grade improvement on a standardized test but we hoped for improvement in their speaking and in their listening comprehension."[Teacher C]. Teacher B said,

> My experience, of especially the students who study English in their own country and then come here... They're in their own country, they think they can speak English because they can read their little textbooks and their teacher speaks very slowly to them. And then they get here and turn on the TV or the radio; they go, "What?! I don't understand a word." Or somebody says, "Hey, how you doin'?" and they go, "What language is that?" You can't tell where one word stops and another word begins. I wanted to get from the point where they got here. . . they kind of, "Ooo! I don't understand a word!" And I wanted them to get, at the end of the time they were here, to be able to communicate in American culture as it's going on.

The teachers had only a few days beforehand to prepare. The program director said, "I wished I had spent more time training the teachers and being explicit in terms of what my expectations were, and those kind of things, but I also want people to have freedom to be able to create things, too." All of the teachers expected that Japanese students would be quiet in class. Teacher B said,

> When I first had Japanese students, it was really hard because I had been teaching Hispanic students before who I couldn't get to shut up. And the Japanese students... it was really different. I had to really be very explicit about what was expected of them. In America students ask questions and they get A's if they ask questions. In America students don't sleep in class. I had to be really explicit about it. I don't think anything ever really prepares you for teaching... a culture that you don't really... that you never lived in. I read a book about Japanese culture, but it didn't help me. Because I still said, "What am I doing wrong?"

Although the students had come to practice and learn communicative English, they faced the difficulty, due to their cultural values, of not being able to speak out in class. All teachers commented on the students' shyness in a big group. The students avoided being in any way conspicuous. Teacher A said, "When I hear them using a book by themselves, it seems like the level is pretty good. But then when I ask them a question, to the whole group, it's hard to get an answer. I think it's more they don't want to be conspicuous. It seems like they understand. But it's harder to get answers in the group, usually." Teacher C said,

> Getting them to participate, particularly in front of the group, was very hard. They could work with one friend or two friends quietly, that was okay. But talking in front of everybody, this probably is hard for anybody, but particularly for these young women. They were definitely quieter and timid at the beginning and it was like pulling teeth to get them to talk and to take a chance to try. It was very hard.

The Cultural Aspects Which Influenced Pedagogy

I asked the teachers how the students' cultural differences influenced their pedagogy. In addition to discussing the students' shyness, teachers mentioned that it was difficult to get the students to have discussions in class. Teacher B said,

> We did a debate. And they had to take opposite points of view and argue. It was very successful. And that was really interesting, because I . . . .Before what had happened often was, if I asked for an opinion, one person gave the opinion, and all the other students would say, "I agree with Haruko." They wouldn't take opposite points of view. But this is the way I set it up. I gave them a sentence about... a nuclear power plant. "We should have nuclear power plants because we need the energy, or we shouldn't." And I assigned each student one point of view. Or, "We should put a road through this beautiful forest to make a resort." So each student knew what she had to argue for, so then they had a really good time doing it. Because then it was more like fun. So they could disagree with each other.
>
> I would ask them questions. I would say, "In Japan what do you do in this situation?" "Oh, we never do this." One time it happened... I was talking... We did a reading about step-families, or something. And I said, "Oh, how many of you have divorced parents?" And of course the students were mortified. And finally one student raised her hand and said, "In Japan we never ask that question. It's really shameful." And I said, "Oh, I'm so sorry. Thank you for telling me." I said, "In America it's no big deal to ask that question. That's fine." That was wonderful that the students could say that to me. It was that kind of communication I think that really helped. And then in the future I could say, "Is it okay to talk about this in your culture?" I could ask. And so that was helpful. Because you want them to raise their hand and ask questions and you also want them to say, "This is hard for us to do." I need to know that. I'm just trying to get them to make conversation. I'm not trying to get them to freak out.
>
> Of course it was infuriating when I would ask someone a question

they would just go... [B ducks her head down.]. They would do the Japanese embarrassment thing. But it doesn't help to push at that point. Because if I say, "Answer my question!" it's going to get worse. That's when I found you have to be really explicit. Then I have to say, "In your country that's fine; in this country it's different." Compare it: not bad, not good. Just different.

Teacher A said,

> I have to pace the class activities fairly quickly because there's less conversation. I have to draw them out more. I have to think about more visual kinds of activities, and not just repeating. I have them repeat only a small portion of the time. I do chorusing very little, just to give them an idea of how it should sound.

What Was Most Difficult in Teaching Japanese Students?

One of the teachers (Teacher A) described experiencing difficulty during the first week with getting the students comfortable and relaxed and able to speak freely. The patience of Teacher D was challenged by repeated grammatical errors, which he found recurred over and over again if he encouraged students to write freely without worrying about grammar. Teacher C had difficulty getting the students to participate at first, particularly in front of the group. The program director found it challenging to get the students to express their opinions. "They were not practicing expressing their opinion in L1, so you have to kind of stage activities slowly to give them not only the language to do it, but also the opportunity or the confidence." Teacher B had difficulty knowing when the students actually understood. She said,

> Most difficult was understanding if they actually understood or not. Because sometimes they would say to me, "Mm!" And

they didn't really get it. They didn't want to insult me by asking a question. Sometimes they just don't have a clue. They don't want to ask. That's a great, great turning point with Japanese students when they can say, "What does that mean? I don't understand that exactly." Finally, it was difficult getting feedback from them.

Teacher C said,

Verbal feedback was really hard to get from them: whether they were looking bored because they understood and the work was too low level or it was so difficult they just give up. It was hard to read them sometimes. It got easier to judge who was understanding it and who wasn't. But at the beginning it was very hard to know what they comprehended because their faces were so polite. I found that they would answer honestly in written feedback.

Some things seemed easy to the teachers. Teacher A said, They read very well and they seem to be able to comprehend if it's written. That's easy. If I write things on the board, they seemed to understand. The quietness of the class makes it harder not easier. It's easy to get their attention, that's not a problem. I never have to quiet down the class, of course. The quietness of the class makes it easy to conduct the class, to carry out the class, but it makes it harder to get the students to really participate.

"Explaining things...they listen to me. I can kind of ham it up."[Teacher B] "The students were obedient and they gave me respect and it was a great joy to teach them." [Teacher C]

The program director said,

Drills were always the easiest doing: drill practice, doing kind of response things. I think students were practiced in doing drills, like grammatical drills, in Japan. Another thing that was easy was to give them tasks - a find-someone-who activity ("find someone who likes yellow shoes," "find someone who eats bananas for breakfast every morning") and then they have to go

and do a search activity but talk to everybody in the class. So things that were structured were often the easiest: pair work, searching for information, or completing a task, or following through on a job.

Advice to ESL Teachers Who Teach Japanese Students

The American ESL teachers had some useful suggestions for other ESL teachers of Japanese young women. Teacher A said,

Immediately get to know their names, try to do pair work more than group work. If you do group work you can have them do chorusing and repeating after you. That would be a way to start, but I guess I would suggest giving them situations they can do in twos or threes. So they're talking to each other....

Teacher B suggested,

You just have to keep doing whatever you can do to try to get them to talk, and sooner or later it'll work. Time. I think you have to not give up. You have to realize that sometimes it just takes time. You have to start with the knowledge the students feel incredibly embarrassed when asked to participate. You have to start with that, and say, "I know this is hard. I know this is embarrassing, I know you would never do this in Japan. But this is America."

Teacher D said,

First, be prepared to deal with social behavioral norms close to a young (15- to 16-year-old) U.S. teenager, especially in matters of cross-cultural and classroom behavior. Not troublesome, but socialized to be "girlish" for a longer part of their lives. Second, be prepared to encounter tears and/or other obvious signs of stress which may result from what you believe to be kind, helpful actions. They can be kind and helpful, but if an 18- to 19-year-old Japanese female has not had prior experience in a class with "American-style" teacher-student relationships, the effect may be to throw them emotionally off-balance in the class.

Lastly, I would urge an American male teacher, with little or no experience with Japanese female students, to remember that what might be seen as patronizing, flirting, or even "silly" behavior from an 18- to 19-year-old American female student is usually, with 18- to 19-year-old Japanese students, simply a societally-condoned form of female behavior pattern, coy and fickle due to societal expectation.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SOME THOUGHTS

I began this paper with the strong desire to help Japanese students and their ESL teachers get the most out of the students' ESL study in the U.S., and also to help young Japanese female students to become aware of and to experience the different American values they have hardly touched in Japan. My intention is not to lead these students in any particular direction. They grew up with one way; I wanted them to see that outside of Japan there are other ways. In this chapter I'll talk about what I would do in another ESL program like the one at Proctor College. I'll also give suggestions for American ESL teachers and write some thoughts for Japanese women in an American ESL program.

Advice to ESL Teachers

I would like to help American teachers who are going to teach in Japan or who are going to teach Japanese students here in the U.S. I hope that this study will give them some insights into what Japanese students are facing when they are in the U.S., and what some of values are that make them behave in ways that might be different from ways an American teacher would want them to behave.

Language with Culture

I have noticed that American ESL teachers tend to feel reluctant to

teach about American values to their students. (Are they worried that they might seem imperialist?) Some have told me that they are only teaching a language, English, not values (either American or their own). But I believe to learn one foreign phrase is to acknowledge an aspect of a foreign culture. For example, I might introduce a dialogue between a husband and wife. The husband, using the polite form, asks the wife, "Would you like some coffee?" The Japanese students wonder why he uses the polite form. Especially, they feel it is strange that the husband uses a polite form to his wife. In Japan a husband would say to his wife, "Coffee," or "Give me some coffee," or "I want to drink some coffee." Then the wife usually stops whatever she is doing and makes coffee for him. But in the U.S. a husband does not usually ask his wife in this way. Although the polite form was used commonly in the Japanese family before World War II, it was used only from inferior to superior or from younger to older, as from wife to husband or child to parent. Japanese language shows explicitly who has power and who does not. In English, using the polite form in the family is a sign of respect from one member of the family to another, and also a sign of equality. If students only translate a typical dialogue (say, of a Japanese husband demanding coffee - a monologue, really) from Japanese to English, it would not be realistic in an American context. Students should be introduced to appropriate cultural behavior in English, otherwise when they need to speak English, for instance with English-speaking people in an English-speaking context, their behavior will sometimes be in danger of being inappropriate.

Short Conversation at the Beginning

At the beginning of a program it is very important for students to learn to speak loudly, give quick responses, request immediate clarification, and

participate in class. Directions and explanation should be given in Japanese. It might be possible to teach them gradually in English, but in order to avoid putting unnecessary stress on students and to make their short stay useful, it is essential to let the students know clearly, as early as possible, what is expected of them in class. When they are in Japan the students are accustomed to waiting until they receive the necessary information. Here in America they realize, sometimes only much later, that they need to ask and collect information for themselves.

During the first week, most of the students translate what they hear in English into Japanese, and then make a Japanese sentence and translate it into English. Finally the sentence comes out. In Japan, though they may have developed good reading knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, the students have had little practice of listening and speaking. No wonder conversation takes a long time! It is almost like a person who knows the names of the parts of a bicycle and how it runs, but has no experience in riding a bicycle. It takes time. At the beginning of the course it is necessary to practice very short conversations of only one or two sentences. They have to be short enough that the students can memorize and practice without translating. Observing the first days of ESL classes, I noticed that teachers tended to introduce too many different expressions in one class. The students were translating back and forth between English and Japanese. They were not directly speaking or listening.

Assignments for Students to Speak English Outside of Class

The students complained of physical exhaustion due to jet lag and intense stress from the new environment, not to mention being surrounded by the English language. The students requested more free time.

Homework, especially writing assignments such as a journal, keep them inside of the dorm instead of going out to speak and listen, applying what they learn in class. American ESL teachers did not realize how long it took the students to write a journal. Even writing one page of a journal easily took them two hours, because they checked the dictionary for each word. It would help if teachers give assignments focusing on speaking outside of class, such as the one in which the students interviewed Americans about Valentine's Day.

Slower Speaking for the First Week

Although keeping normal speaking speed is very important, I suggest for the first week that the teacher speak more slowly in order to lessen the students' anxiety about not being able to understand what the teacher says. For the first week they are intense and nervous. What they need most at the beginning is to experience the confidence that they can communicate with their teacher in English, and that their English is understandable, communicative enough.

Having Students Teach You Their Language

Speaking one or two Japanese words or phrases, an ESL teacher would help students feel less distant and more relaxed. In fact, the teacher's willingness to learn one or two words in Japanese, or to try to pronounce them correctly, encourages the students to make the same efforts in English with less embarrassment. I remember one student who expressed to me her disappointment that her teacher did not show any interest or respect for her language or culture. Especially, it is great fun for the students to teach or help their American teachers in Japanese (for instance, a good question might be,

"How do you say 'difficult' in Japanese?") Japanese students, especially women, experience the greatest pleasure and self-esteem when they feel they are helping.

Waiting an Extra Minute

Teachers know well Japanese students' inability to interrupt. Therefore it is better to give students enough time to say what they want to say and make sure they complete their sentences. Avoid cutting a student off, because students may easily feel neglected because of their inability to use English.

The quietness of Japanese students' reactions is also well known. They need to practice over and over through activities how to speak up. Just telling them to speak up does not make them speak up. And even if they speak loudly in class once, in the next class they will be quiet again. The students easily return to their habit of quietness unless they are repeatedly made aware of the necessity of speaking up.

No Dictionary in Class

I question the usage of a dictionary in class; I feel students can easily ask for the meaning of unknown words from their classmates and teachers. They need to use the vocabulary they already have, however limited, to ask. Immediate translation from Japanese to English by checking in a dictionary does not help students to think in English. I encourage them to ask me, in English, for definitions.

Classroom Interactions

It is important for an ESL teacher to remember that a classroom is a formal setting for Japanese students. As much as possible students try to avoid drawing attention to themselves in class. If a presentation is prepared slowly and carefully, however, they can manage.

Japanese students need a lot of courage to express their own opinions in a group. Talking in front of a group is much more formal than chatting with their friends. They feel, when they express an opinion in a group, that the opinion has to be worthwhile to merit being presented in front of the group. The opinion also has to be correct or "right" for an issue that the class is talking about. To avoid disagreement, the opinion needs to fit the majority opinion. A student has to have a specific reason to talk in front of the group. Either she has to be in the position of superior, or it is her duty to make a speech. Saying one's opinion without considering the group one belongs to is highly unusual and culturally inappropriate for Japanese.

In my own experience, I have been amazed that whenever there is a skit to do, American students immediately start expressing creative ideas freely. Japanese students in a class collectively cry, "Oh, no." They first need time to confront the idea that they will have to deal with the stress of being conspicuous in the group. Creative ideas will not come as quickly as they do for the American students. Creativity is not encouraged in Japan's educational system; there is no need to be creative, only to memorize what the teacher says. I understand that not only do American students frequently create and perform skits in elementary school, but also that they are encouraged to express their opinions at home. Creativity and individuality are encouraged both at home and at school. In contrast, Japanese students are

trained to maintain harmony above all else. There should be no variety of opinion, which would only make it difficult to maintain harmony.

Discussion is another of Japanese students' weak points. Discussion is often mistaken for an argument or a conflict in Japan. A conversation differs depending on whom you are talking to in Japan. For example, an order, a suggestion, or advice given from a superior to someone of lower position calls for one style of discourse. And conversely, there are different forms of polite requests, ambiguous indirect advice, from lower position to superior position. Even when they are chatting, Japanese pay attention to the level or status of the person with whom they are talking. Chatting can be direct and open only in a group where all of the members share equal status (for example, family or friends.)

Things I Would Do Differently in Another Program

Orientation

I would do a thorough orientation in Japanese on the first day. It is extremely important for students to have correct information on expected participation in ESL class, on dormitory life, and on field trips and other activities in the program. This is not only to guarantee a smooth start for students, but to avoid unnecessary stress. Depending on the students' English level, some information can be given in English, but it is necessary to check carefully their understanding. Within the first few days after their arrival, after having the students write their objectives for the program, I would conduct short individual interviews. Since the students would neither participate actively in class nor approach a teacher individually at least for the first week, it is good for a teacher to initiate contact to get to know the students and their needs individually, and for the students to focus as soon as

possible.

My supervisor at the School for International Training said,

> Ideally, if it's not the first group going over, I would videotape people from the first group giving advice to their classmates about living and language, and so on. Since they've been through it, I'd choose five or six of the students, and have them speak in Japanese.
> Another thing that might be interesting in orientation, is to try to talk about what their expectations are and then respond to that, especially if you already know about the site. And then maybe orientation could be the time to have them set goals. Have them think about the idea that it is a learning experience, so they are going to learn, but they are also going to have to do something to help themselves learn. Maybe they could do it in Japanese on one side of a paper and on the other side in English, as much as they could. You can give people information, but the information is not really useful until they get there. In some ways in the orientation it might be useful to try to help them to already start thinking about the experience and themselves, and what advice they would give themselves. Get their minds thinking about the experience in advance.

Let them Speak outside of Class

Many students were eager to speak with American students, but they seemed unable to find a chance to talk to Americans. From the beginning, therefore, I would give students assignments to talk to other people outside of class as often as possible, in the cafeteria, in the dorm, and in the shopping mall, using, for example, questions like, "Excuse me, what time is it?" "Excuse me, could you tell me where the nearest pay phone is?" I would include suggestions on how to approach people to ask a question, what possible responses to expect, and how to end the conversation. This assignment should start with only one sentence. To start with, the students can do it either by themselves or in small groups. I would make sure to check that

they do the assignment. I learned the students did not do assignments if they were not checked. The students can compare their results. I would assign them to report how they use English in providing themselves necessities. If the students need to buy stamps, I would assign them to go and buy the stamps and report their experience to the class. Each day they should try to speak English outside of class. The class can be the place to prepare and report. The report should include both writing on the board and speaking in class. Teachers can find more useful activities in the book entitled Experiential Language Teaching Techniques (Jerald and Clark, 1983).

Five-minute Warm-up

I would use the five minutes or so at the beginning of each class as a warm-up time and for a review quiz. In the first week, the warm-up should only consist in the practice of simple greetings, clarification expressions, or simple grammar structures. It is important to determine what the students already know. The warm-up has to be pronounced clearly in simple sentences. Depending on the students' pace, I would gradually add to the warm-up day by day. When I asked students, "How are you?" in the first class, only a few could say, "Fine." It took several more classes for them to say, "Fine, thank you. And you?" In a week or two they wanted to add variety, such as, "Pretty good," "Not bad," "So-so," "I don't feel good because ..."

My supervisor told me that little things, like my five-minute warm-up, add up to a big thing. It would have been interesting if I had taped that first class and the amount of time it took them to process and respond, and compared that tape with a tape of the last class, where they were much more comfortable.

Practice answering, "I think ... "

A question the students were always asked and were not used to being asked in Japan was, "What do you think?" or "What do you want?" It was their first time to have a chance to think "what I think" or "what I want." They were shocked to realize they didn't have much to say about "I think... " or "I want ....". Individuality is not important in Japan. It is often the last issue you might think about. This was a new experience for the students. It gave the students a good opportunity to think about and express what they really want to do in their lives.

About Japanese Teachers Teaching English

When I told people that I taught English to Japanese exchange students in the U.S., the reaction of most people, especially Japanese, was a little surprised, and often they asked me why students wanted to learn English from a Japanese teacher in the U.S. I myself asked this. However, after the experience with this group at Proctor College, I changed my mind. I believe now that students need someone who understands both cultures and stands on the students' side, to counsel them as they are adjusting to the new environment and values. I think ESL teachers frequently concentrate only on grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. The students need to learn the sociolinguistic aspects of communication as well.

As my supervisor told me,

> The nature of your role was already one in which you would help them make the transition. You have several advantages being a Japanese teacher of English. First is that you were an example of what they can become. You are a fluent speaker of English, so that's already an advantage. A native speaker, of

course, speaks English. It is their native language. But you are the example of what they can become. So you have that advantage. You are also a bridge. You can understand how it might appear to them from their points of view. For example, it's common in our culture to engage in small talk. You're standing in the lunch line and it's common to just say something to the person next to you, even if you don't know them. You have been in this culture, understand that this can happen and doesn't signify that there is any obligation to begin a relationship. And you also know what to say and how to respond. For a young Japanese woman coming in, she might have a very different perspective when someone tried to talk to her in line. She doesn't know what to expect and she doesn't know why this person is talking to her and so on. So you can bridge, because you understand what she might be going through but you can also help her see what the American is doing. That is another advantage, in addition to being someone who is a fluent speaker that can show them the goal for them and an example of what they can become. Those two things and your many experiences as a Japanese who spent time in this culture make you better equipped to deal with culture than someone who is a native of the culture. You know the students' culture and you know this culture from the vantage point of their culture.

My thoughts for Japanese Women in an American ESL Program

Eighteen- year-old female students who grow up in a highly controlled society where their role has been decided have a chance to explore a sharply contrasting culture as they learn English. Learning English has been an opportunity for a better education and a better career in Japan. Knowledge of English, especially speaking ability, has been considered a symbol of intellect and sophistication in Japan. But I also hope that students could experience that there is a possibility of using English to learn equal and free expression instead of discriminated communication between man and woman or between superior and lower position. There is the possibility of a dialogue between two parties to freely exchange their ideas.

As I wrote in my introduction, my teaching goals were two-fold: (1) to

teach my students skills for participating successfully in classes, and (2) to build their confidence by providing them with culturally accurate situations in which they could test new ideas and feel self-assertive. I have demonstrated how I identified and developed important skills for my students. Working on this project I have been struck by how delicately, complexly and differently each culture interprets the other's behavior. I learned how important it is to be aware of the differences in the other culture and to try to adjust to them as comfortably as possible. I observed each student blending into American life, seeing and experiencing the differences in the two cultures, at her own pace and depth, and reconsidering or discovering herself. I found that acquiring certain skills in order to participate in ESL classes in the U.S., such as speaking loudly, asking for clarification, giving quick responses and expressing opinions, had great influence on the students. The students began to think of themselves as moving from passive to active, and they all felt themselves become outgoing in different degrees. They became more aware of the importance of their free direct expression. They all learned how important it was to have their own opinions and express them.

To learn a language is to learn its culture and values and to have reshaped the learner's world view. Being able to leave Japan and see one's own country from outside means seeing yourself from outside, too. Students have a chance to rethink the values they had accepted unconsciously and automatically. For example, in Japan when people give a gift, they are supposed to say, "It's a trifle." No one who gives a gift would say, "This is a wonderful gift." You have to put yourself one level down by saying your gift is trivial in order to show your modesty and humbleness, to be polite. Another example of being humble: you are supposed to say, "No, No, No."

when someone compliments you. I cannot stop feeling and saying this, even after living in the U.S. for over twelve years. I know this makes Americans laugh, wondering why I refuse their compliments. This automatic reaction is a part of my identity; I can't help it. If I answer, "Thank you," I feel uncomfortable. It is not me. There are certain values and customs I do not want to change. But if it relates to being successful in ESL class, students should consider changing their behaviors for that purpose.

Is it possible for Japanese female students to practice self-assertion through learning English and the skills of second language acquisition in the U.S.? My answer is "Yes." As I discussed in other chapters, it is unavoidable for students to step beyond their culture in order to participate in ESL classes in the U.S. They have to express their opinions, they have to speak loudly, they have to respond quickly, and they have to make clarifications, by themselves, as soon as possible.

Many young Japanese people come to the U.S. to study English. Lately the number of teenagers enrolling in ESL programs in American high schools, colleges, and universities has been significantly larger than before. Some of these teenagers were "*tōkō kyohi*" ("resistant to going to school", not fitting into the Japanese school system - a recent social syndrome in Japan.) There are two problematic points in the current Japanese education system: many trivial school regulations and heavy emphasis on the university entrance examination. Horio (1988: 214) says,

> These abuses of the child's rights to freely grow and learn result from the ideology of overmanagement which dominates contemporary Japanese society. Whether it be their hairstyle, the length of their skirts, the color of their socks, or the width of their bookbags, all aspects of our children's lives are being managed through the highly detailed rules enacted by and enforced in the nation's schools.

He continues, "What kind of society are we living in that permits such flagrant infringements upon the freedom of individual expression?" Some of the Japanese teenagers who come to ESL classes bring superficial knowledge about the U.S., such as American pop music, American fast food, and American casual fashion. They don't seem to understand its customs and values. I do urge them to learn, to experience, the different values of the U.S. while learning English.

One of my students, Seiko, told me at the end of the program:

> I liked living in the U.S. because freedom and self-assertion was accepted as a good thing. I was shocked to experience an American school class so different from a class in Japan. I had never given thought in Japan, as I did in the U.S., to how I was feeling or thinking. I have begun not to be afraid of making mistakes. I have begun to feel confidence in, and love, myself. Although as a Japanese female I do not want to lose shyness (*hajirai*) or modesty, I want to be more self-assertive. I have stopped worrying how others think of me. Instead, I have accepted myself as I am. I have learned it is okay for me to feel honestly, not hiding my true feelings or thoughts from others. I have begun to talk about myself and my opinions by using English. The U.S. required me to have my own opinion. I have felt more myself in the U.S. than in Japan.

APPENDIX I

THE FIRST QUESTIONNAIRE

(in Japanese)

1. Why do you want to come and study English in the U.S.?
2. What would you like to do during your stay?
3. What do you expect during your stay?
4. What are your country's important customs that you want to teach your international friends?
5. What do you think you will like about living in the U.S.?
6. If you could live in either country, in your country or (without a language problem) in the U.S., in which country would you like to live? Why?

APPENDIX II

THE SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE

(in Japanese)

1. What makes you comfortable in class?

2. What makes you uncomfortable?

APPENDIX III

THE THIRD QUESTIONNAIRE

(in Japanese)

1. What has changed for you in the past three weeks?
2. What do you think is necessary for you to improve your English during the latter part of the program?

APPENDIX IV

THE FOURTH QUESTIONNAIRE

(in Japanese)

1. To what things have you tried to adjust yourself in the U.S.? Please write as many as possible.
2. What were the most difficult things to adjust to? Why do you think they were so difficult?
3. What were the easiest things to adjust to? Why do you think they were easy?
4. If you were going to be a college student in the U.S., what would be the things you would need to change or adjust in yourself? Also, what would you not want to change? What would be impossible to change?
5. What would you choose to change in yourself as a Japanese or Korean woman so that you would fit into American life and customs?
6. Have you changed or felt differently about yourself since you came to the U.S.? Is that good? Why? Is that bad? Why?

APPENDIX V

THE RE-ENTRY QUESTIONNAIRE

(in Japanese)

1. What was the first thing you wanted to do when you returned to Japan?
2. What have you noticed in Japan that you hadn't noticed before your ESL experience in the U.S.?
3. Do you have anyone with whom you can talk or consult freely?
4. What are the things you feel have changed in you in the U.S. that don't fit in Japan?
5. What are the things you don't like in Japan after you have come back from the U.S.?
6. What are the things about which you felt good in Japan after all?
7. What do you miss or think good in the life you spent in the U.S.?
8. What are the strongest cultural differences you feel between Japan and the U.S.?
9. Has anyone told you that you have changed because you went to the U.S.?
10. Do you feel differently about being in a group in Japan after being in the U.S.?
11. Do you feel it is difficult to act as a person, as an individual, because of a group?

12. Would you like to go to the U.S. again? If so, why?
13. If you don't want to go again, why?
14. Could you give advice to Japanese women who are going to the U.S. as students?

APPENDIX VI

INTERVIEWS WITH AMERICAN ESL TEACHERS

These transcriptions of the interviews with the American ESL teachers, the program director, and my supervisor have been made as literally as possible. Changes in the text have been kept to a minimum, commensurate with sense and intelligibility.

1. What were your pedagogical expectations?

A: The Japanese students were more quiet ... but I hoped that through the class ... As I heard them use our book - we had a speaking book - they read very well. And it seemed they could talk if they were in a situation, a specific situation. [**Interviewer**: You, mean, with the textbook ... ?] But not just reading from the book, the textbook gave them a situation in which they seemed to respond okay. My expectation was, try to get them away from using a book and be communicative in their speaking with someone. That's what I hoped for in time.

B: The program had been set to be communicative, not grammar-based to really try to get the students just to jump in and feel they can communicate in situations. Because my experience of especially the students who study English in their own country and then come here... They're in their own country, they think they can speak English because they can read their little textbooks and their teacher speaks very slowly to them. And then they get here and turn on the TV or the radio; they go, "What?! I don't understand a word." Or somebody says, "Hey, how you doin'?" and they go, "What

language is that?" You can't tell where one word stops and another word begins. I wanted to get from the point where they got here. . . they kind of, "Ooo! I don't understand a word!" And I want them to get, at the end of the time they were here, to be able to communicate in American culture as it's going on. Like...you just saw Mariko and Kimi...those students were in September 1995...those were two girls who were in my class the first day, and they sat there with this look on their faces of absolute terror. And when I'd ask them a question they would just put their head down. And look at them now! Now they see me from a hundred yards away; they yell my name; they run over... They could never have done that before. They scream out people's names, they yell, they say, "Hi, how are you?" I remember with Mariko, after she had been my student for about two weeks, her grandmother died in Japan. And she came into the class one day and she had just gotten a phone call that her grandmother was sick. And she came into the class a few minutes late. She stood at the door of the class and she started weeping. And I went, in my American way, went right over to her and put my arm around her which I think is completely antithetical to Japanese culture. And I said, "Are you okay? I'll take you to the bathroom." And then two days later, she wrote me a note and she said, "I just want to let you know - I can't say this to you in person because I'd start to cry again - but, thank you for your help. My grandmother did die." And then she said, "I think America...I can't remember the exact words, but it was something like, America is hug. And I like it." So I can tell that it was an experience she hadn't had before, that whole thing about hugging people, you see. That was new. That's sort of... my expectations were to try to do that, to get people to do that.

C: I taught a three-hour American Communication course and it was called "Connect to Culture". We tried to teach them functional

communication skills, vocabulary, slang, American customs, to some extent a light dose of grammar, not heavy grammar work, survival skills. My expectation was not high for any grade improvement on a standardized test but we hoped for improvement in their speaking and in their listening comprehension.

D: My pedagogical expectations were that I would be allowed to teach in my personal method(s) of choice and that I would be teaching students who strongly desired to learn conversational English. I did not expect to have to issue grades.

E (the program director): I guess what I wanted to do was to try to find out where they were coming from, to get to know the group and the expectations not only of the students but also the school, the institution that was sponsoring them, and to find out what the purpose of the trip was and how we were going to offer a program and design a program that was going to meet those expectations. And, basically, after speaking with the folks in Japan and meeting the students, I proposed running a program that was an experientially based language program, and something that would allow the students to actually be integrating applied knowledge, the knowledge they had about English, and then apply that knowledge in contexts or situations, and then to hire teachers who had the background and experience to do that. I initially contacted the School for International Training because I knew the teaching method and the pedagogical practices that people bring to language teaching. I hired you and two other teachers, because there was expectation that we had similar values towards teaching language involving students, making students responsible, making it an active participatory-type of situation. I was unable to hire people who were trained in all those kind of methods: in CLL, Silent Way, Community Language Learning, etc. But I

made it a point to purchase materials or books that reflected those beliefs or those values and also to create resources for the teachers in order to do that better. For me it was difficult to be an academic resource for the teachers and to kind of serve as a senior guide or mentor to them because I was also running so many other parts of the program, too, dealing with a lot of the administrative details and bureaucracy of planning trips, and there wasn't a lot of support for me from other parts of the college.

So there were certain things . . . I wished I had spent more time training the teachers and being explicit in terms of what my expectations were and those kind of things, but I also want people to have freedom to be able to create things, too.

2. Was your orientation/preparation adequate?

A: We had a few days before, preparing. I think it was okay. We talked a little bit about how the students perform and the expectations that we can have. So that I would say it was adequate. This year was good, as far as the expectations for the syllabus. The expectations for the classroom were clear.

B: Well, I think my whole life was my orientation and preparation. As far as preparation to teach Japanese students, I had already been teaching Japanese students... but when I first had Japanese students, it was really hard because I had been teaching Hispanic students before who I couldn't get to shut up. And the Japanese students... it was really different. I had to really be very explicit about what was expected of them. In America students ask questions and they get A's if they ask questions. In America students don't sleep in class. I had to be really explicit about it. And luckily, too, Mary [the director of program then] was always there to help. There were so many people who were familiar with Japanese culture that I could ask. But I don't

think anything ever really prepares you for teaching... a culture that you don't really... that you never lived in. I read a book about Japanese culture, but it didn't help me. Because I still said, "What am I doing wrong?" I still thought that there would be something I could have done differently. And I think a lot of it is time, too. People need time to kind of... tune. And also the stages of culture shock. You know the video, "Cold Water"? At a certain point... you can't show that to your students the first day. They don't get it. As they're . . . like, "Oh, we love everything!" After about a month and a half, they are all miserable; then you show it and they go, "Oh, Oh, I see. It's not just me. Oh, this is culture shock. It's not that I hate everything about America. It's not that the food is all awful. It's just that I'm feeling so lost right now."

C: I think they were all right. We had a few days to prepare for the particular course. My background was weak in Japanese girls. This was my first time teaching Japanese girls and was one of my first times back in the classroom in a number of years. The faculty didn't have a clear understanding about what level the girls would be. But I knew I would have a middle group. But we didn't know what middle meant. Compared to what? The first few days we just did getting-to-know-you games and then quickly I modified lessons to suit their level.

D: Yes, I think my preparation was adequate, as plans often change anyway once in the classroom. As for "orientation," I don't really remember any?

3. Were your expectations being met?

A: I think it may have to do more with the level than it has to do with the students, themselves. Sometimes I had to get them to speak more than,

say, with students I have at community college. I have to prompt them more to get them to speak. I have a lot of activities and put them in situations they must speak - activities, hand out sheets, a lot of pair work together.

B: I could see the students' change. I could see that they were more confident ... probably about... between three and four weeks. I think we did a debate. And they had to take opposite points of view and argue. It was very successful. And that was really interesting, because I.... Before what had happened often was, if I asked for an opinion, one person gave the opinion, and then all the other students would say, "I agree with Haruko." They wouldn't take opposite points of view. But this is the way I set it up. I set it up where I gave them a sentence about... a nuclear power plant. "We should have nuclear power plants because we need the energy, or we don't." And I assigned each student one point of view. Or, "We should put a road through this beautiful forest to make a resort." So each student knew what she had to argue for, so then they had a really good time doing it. Because then it was more like fun. So they could disagree with each other. So that worked pretty well. And I could see they were interacting with Americans. They would come back and have questions on boys. We talked about some of the experiences they had on weekend trips. They were writing journals. In journals they were writing about the experiences they were having. I certainly don't think what I was doing was... It was just a piece of what was going on, because they had my class, and then they had your class in the afternoon, and in the evening they had movies, and dinners and every weekend they went off on a different thing. So they were really pretty immersed. Although some of them weren't. Some of them stayed only with each other and didn't take risks.

C: I think they did far better than I had thought at the beginning. I

think in those 6 weeks the girls really grew. They relaxed and developed a little confidence and shed their shyness. That occurred with all of the teachers they had during the day encouraging them to be more open, speaking up. Lots of them really blossomed. They bloomed like flowers by the end. I think they made a big improvement in their English and because I didn't know what they were like before, it's hard to say whether they became more assertive but I would say they did. They became more confident in themselves in their individual ability to perform in a difficult environment. I encouraged them. I told them I would grade them on participation and speaking out loud and that it would be a part of their grade. But mostly I used humor, I think just being relaxed, casual and non threatening helped them to take risks with their speaking. So they wouldn't be afraid of this old American teacher. You know, to lower the affective filter that Steven Krashen talks about.

D: Were my expectations met? Yes, with the significant exception of having to issue individual grades when we had been specifically informed that this would not be a credit program.

E: There were lots of things I learned from the program, in terms of pedagogy, in terms of maturity of teachers, in terms of expectations. What I should have demanded from people beforehand was a complete course outline and materials. I had asked . . . One of the teachers was very late in returning course outlines to me. . . But before hiring anybody or accepting anybody for an internship I should have asked them to teach for me, to watch them do a demonstration, although it was time consuming, to have them do a demonstration lesson. Also, just being from a certain institution, that is not a guarantee that the person is necessarily an excellent teacher. But . . . I think the students loved the program, and they loved their teachers. Overall I

hired people who were committed to the students and for me the most joyous moment was at the final ceremony when those students expressed their love of their teachers and their appreciation for all that had been done for them. So as a program administrator, I could step back . . . It's kind of like being a parent and seeing your children be successful . . . you know that your children are getting an award or they are getting some kind of a prize and you can feel very proud because you've laid the foundation, you provided them support, you have gone through the tears and the fights and the agonies and all these other things and in the long run it all works out.

4. Are there any cultural aspects that have interfered with the fulfillment for your pedagogical expectations?

A: Given that we do want them to speak in class more, what makes that possible is the small class size. That helps a lot. That maybe would override the cultural limitation. [**Interviewer**: Now, how small ...?] Ten. It was twelve last year. Ten this year. It makes it very easy to get them into groups, to talk individually to them, to try to have more interaction with them. I'm just not sure... When I hear them using a book by themselves, it seems like the level is pretty good. But then when I ask them a question to the whole group, then it's hard to get an answer. [**Interviewer**: Do you think it's maybe because of listening comprehension, or they don't want to be conspicuous in a group?] Well, I think it's more they don't want to be conspicuous. It seems like they understand. But it's harder to get answers in the group, usually. It's easier if I'm with them individually. So there's something about the group maybe that is difficult for them.

B: No, because I think I really understood that I was dealing with lovely young human beings. But ones who came from a different culture.

But ultimately we are all human beings. There are things that they are frightened of that I'm not frightened of but there are things they're not frightened of that I'm frightened of. So you have to kind of look at it as, we're all human beings. I don't think any culture is alien from any other culture. Just like, I don't think any language is completely alien from any other language. There's basically... I think I'm sort of a Chomskian, there's basically one language. And it's in our brain; and babies learn language like they learn to walk. Nobody teaches them. They just... it's biological, I think. How can any human being be really that different from any other? [**Interviewer**: In Japan, especially in the classroom, the teacher has the authority, and the students shouldn't say anything unless they're asked to say something. So they wouldn't even challenge a teacher, they do whatever the teacher... obedience is so strong. So I wonder if you had a very difficult time to ... the students being so quiet, no talking.] By the time the Japanese college program started I'd already been battling with it, for the first semester at Proctor. So at the beginning it was really hard, because my students were silent. [**Interviewer**: But also, you have all the human beings, so you felt that way, so it wasn't a big problem...] And Mariko went through her grandmother dying. And that was just such a sad thing. How could I not love my students when things like that happened? I could see they were suffering. I could see how hard it was for them. Of course it was infuriating when I would ask someone a question and they would just go... [B ducks her head down.]. They would do the Japanese embarrassment thing. But it doesn't help to push at that point. Because if I say, "Answer my question!" it's going to get worse. That's when I found you have to be really explicit. Then I have to say, "In your country that's fine; in this country it's different." Compare it: not bad, not good. Just different. [**Interviewer**: So you said there

is a difference in cultures, and in the classrooms, also. You just told them, all the time. Did you explain to them?] Not at first, because I was too lost at first. But then I started to be really explicit about it. I would ask them questions. I would say, "In Japan what do you do in this situation?" "Oh, we never do this." One time it happened... I was talking... we did a reading about step-families, or something. And I said, "Oh, how many of you have divorced parents?" And of course the students were mortified. And finally one student raised her hand and said, "In Japan we never ask that question. It's really shameful." And I said, "Oh, I'm so sorry. Thank you for telling me." I said, "In America it's no big deal to ask that question. That's fine." That was wonderful that the students could say that to me. It was that kind of communication I think that really helped. And then in the future I could say, "Is it okay to talk about this in your culture?" I could ask. And so that was helpful.

Because you want them to raise their hand and ask questions and you also want them to say, "This is hard for us to do." I need to know that. I'm just trying to get them to make conversation. I'm not trying to get them to freak out.

C: Well definitely at the beginning and right through the end they were more timid and quieter than 15 or 12 American girls would be, which made it a joy to teach them because they didn't argue with me, they never talked back, they were always pretty much on time and did their homework and obeyed. So in a way this being obedient and non-questioning made it a great teaching experience. They were definitely quieter and timid at the beginning and it was like pulling teeth to get them to talk and to take a chance to try. It was very hard. And really the only way you can learn to speak English is give it a shot. Everybody's personality is different and outgoing

students come along faster. Some of them are shy but they all would stay after class every now and then. A different person would stay after class to talk to me one-on-one. That was, a nice chance to get to know them a little bit.

D: No. No cultural aspects interfered with the fulfillment of my pedagogical expectations.

E: I guess I was taken a back by the selfishness of some of the students, which resulted from being very young but also from having people take care of them all their lives and being rather self-centered. And lots of times I took their criticisms of the program too personally. I think I should have exercised more humor. Well, they were 18 years old and I appreciate what they were saying but I'm thirty some years old and I know from my experience that, you know, "*Shoganaine*" ["it can not be helped"]. [**Interviewer**: You said their selfishness. . . have you ever experienced Japanese female students their age. . . selfishness and self-assertion - two differences?] Selfishness is being focused on yourself, not thinking of other people, and being concerned about your particular needs to . . . For example, one of the students, the first night when we got to the dormitory, she was all pissed off that she was going to have to be in a room with two other people. And they have just arrived and we were trying to get everybody together. And of course I want to pay attention to her needs but there's only so much I can do. Or people saying, "Well, I want a host family by myself." Sorry, I did the best that I could do. You'll have to make the best of the situation and just kind of accept it. But if they didn't get their way, if they didn't get the ideal room on campus or the homestay was not perfect for them, then it was, like, my fault. Or their trip to America was ruined. [**Interviewer**: Do you think that it would have been different if you were taking the same age group from an American school to Japan?] Oh,

certainly. I think the American students would probably be more wild, and probably escaping at night and all kind of things. I'm a language teaching professional. The other parts of my job I had to do like, being a tour director, a resident director, arranging rooms, arranging trips and making sure that they had sandwiches on the bus, making sure everybody has a ticket and there was help, that American college students were talking to Japanese students, and people were happy. A lot of that is basically thankless work. I felt for me a lot of the time it was demeaning. It wasn't really professionally where I wanted to be. For me to have 18- or 19-year-old students talking to me like I'm some kind of servant for them. For me it was not the most enjoyable part of my job. But also I have to say that the chaperons were not proactive. In an American situation, the chaperon would have taken more responsibility. It made a big difference that I was a woman and they were men. Japanese men, even though one of the men was an American, he had been so acculturated. He also expected a certain level of service. And I was always praised for that quality by him. Also the older Japanese men said, "You are not like other Americans and we really appreciate this. You are so Japanese-like and we really know you are working so hard for us."

For me, it was the first year this Japanese college came to Proctor, so it was important in a business sense for me to serve them. Because it was important to Proctor to continue the contract. So I not only had the pressure of running a quality academic program but also paying attention to the business needs of the program and making sure the contract was signed again and that the parties were pleased that I had done an evaluation and presentation addressing issues that people brought up. Also in a lot of ways I was the personal servant of Mssrs. P. and S. [the chaperons], and had to bring them to certain places which I didn't really mind but also it's kind of like . . . .

So I was pleased in one sense that . . . I was upset to that they didn't take responsibility, for informing the students or being authoritarian with the students that if something was needed to be addressed, they said, "Oh, you do such a good job. Why don't you do it?" That's another reason I wonder how things are going now because I wonder if the director now is doing the same things that I did or if . . . I think for me like I'm an overly conscientious person, having worked at a college in Japan for so long. I know about all the details. I had been on the other end when I was a chaperon when we went to an American university with students for two years and I know what my expectations were and what I wanted from the people who are providing a program for me. So I had the experience of being a client. But it was interesting because I knew that if I ran it again this year that there were things I was too Japanese about. I'm an educated person.

5. How has your pedagogy changed as a result of being a teacher of Japanese female students, aged eighteen to nineteen years old?

A: Well, I find I have to pace the class activities fairly quickly because there's less conversation. I have to draw them out more, I have to use more activities. I have to think about more visual kinds of activities, and not just repeating. I have them repeat only a small portion of the time. I do chorusing very little, just to give them an idea of how it should sound. Because when I hear them read, they can read fine. They seemed to read fine. They don't have real trouble, unless it's a new word. They really need practice on just being able to construct a sentence it seems to me, not on reading. For me having them chorus is not as good a use of time as trying to get them to create their own sentences, construct their own sentences. I focus much more on that. I do very little chorusing. We would stay in the book,

Conversational Strategies, for half an hour. But there are a lot of activities in the book, so, sometimes 45 minutes. I would maybe do some other activities . . . sometimes dialogues together, make up dialogues, give them a situation, they have to talk about it. Maybe write and then talk about what they've written.

B: It changes when I'm teaching Japanese students. But now of course it's different, now that I'm teaching Dominican students again. And now that I'm teaching thirteen-year olds. Of course it's changing. Actually every classroom you walk into, you have to change your pedagogy depending on the students, depending on what their needs are, what they're interested in, what they're not interested in, what turns them on, what they need. [**Interviewer**: How do you find out?] You have to try things. I was amazed that my Dominican boy students today loved doing Origami. But they like to do the Kusudama; they didn't like to do the bird. But they liked the little modular pieces, little pyramids, where you fit different pieces together, which was interesting, that they liked doing that. I didn't know if they were going to like it. But maybe my class tomorrow, which is another group of Dominican students... , may be they won't like it. You try it. Maybe it works. Maybe it won't. Sometimes it won't work with another group. The thing I'm learning is I can't take it personally. It doesn't have to do with me. You're just trying things. [**Interviewer**: That's very difficult. I take it so personally. I think, "What am I doing here?"] I know. I'm trying very hard to keep it separate. Teaching is really hard.

C: How I changed? I don't know. I want to say that because they were so delightful to teach, it made me feel warmer about teaching, more understanding how difficult it is to be far from home and learning, a difficult language. During those 6 weeks it was possible to get to know each girl as an

individual and to try to encourage and support her learning.

D: I have found that rather than the problem being getting them to speak English, when among friends in a "tight" group, they may talk a lot....but in Japanese.

6. What were the most difficult things? Why?

A: The first week. [**Interviewer**: The most difficult?] Yeah, because you are trying to get the students to be comfortable and relaxed and to freely speak. I have to learn their names immediately and I have to call them by name. So that's another good thing about the small class for a short time. If I know them by name and then I can call them and get a response. And they usually respond if I call on them and ask them. Still in the group it's harder to get them to respond.

B: But most difficult was understanding if they actually understood or not. Because sometimes they would say to me, "Mm." And they didn't really get it. They didn't want to insult me by asking a question. Sometimes they just don't have a clue. They don't want to ask. That's a great, great turning point with Japanese students when they can say, "What does that mean? I don't understand that exactly." [**Interviewer**: But they do it. That's kind of insulting...] No, they ask each other or they come after class and ask me a question about it. One thing that's very difficult is the whole question of how you get students to acquire grammar without teaching them grammar. They would keep journals. [**Interviewer**: Most of the Japanese, I thought, compared to other countries, nationalities... their grammar is pretty good, pretty strong... It wasn't like that?] No, not when they're trying to write in journals. [**Interviewer**: What about making them speak in the class? Wasn't that difficult?] We did a lot of paired exercises. Spontaneous speech... well,

the group I had, the class I had, was the top level. They were so enthusiastic, they were so happy to be here. They were really great. They were much more motivated than my regular the American students. Because I had a big class. What did I have? 10 or 12 students.

C: Getting them to participate, particularly in front of the group was very hard. They could work with one friend or two friends quietly, that was okay. But talking in front of everybody, this probably is hard for anybody, but particularly it was difficult for them to understand at first. The book was a little difficult to work with, understanding the format of it. They had difficulty using the questions on one page and the answers on the next page. The vocabulary was a too high a level for them. Verbal feedback was really hard to get from them: whether they were looking bored because they understood and the work was too low level or it was so difficult they just gave up. It was hard to read them sometimes. It got easier to judge who was understanding it and who wasn't. But at the beginning it was very hard to know what they comprehended because their faces were so polite. I found that they would answer honestly in written feedback.

D: The most difficult thing that I taught was probably the writing. Why? Because if you encourage a student to write freely and not to be afraid of the grammar, then you have to be patient with grammatical errors, even if the same ones occur over and over again. Oh, also Mardi Gras - I had them make masks and they spent much more time than I thought making them.

E: To activate them, to encourage them to express their opinion. Because they were not practicing expressing their opinion in L1, so you have to kind of stage activities slowly to give them not only the language to do it but also the opportunity or the confidence. So rather than having kind of big open group discussions, I did pair work or had students have a task. Japanese

students really seem to enjoy having a job to do and they need explicit instructions about what is expected of them; moving from very structured activities to more open activities - I found if I started with open activities, "Well, what do you think about the rain forest?" They would be. . . [E makes a puzzled face]. But if we did the rain forest vocabulary and reading about the rain forest and then a pair activity and small groups and then we built up to a three minute speech about something. It's almost like having an egg and then nurturing it and caring for it, warming it and having it hatch and then kind of making it into a big chicken.

7. What were the easiest things? Why?

A: They read very well and they seem to be able to comprehend if it's written. That's easy. If I write things on the board, they seemed to understand. The quietness of the class makes it harder not easier. It's easy to get their attention, that's not a problem. I never have to quiet down the class, of course. The quietness of the class makes it easy to conduct the class, to carry out the class, but it makes it harder to get the students to really participate.

B: Well, the easiest, of course, is explaining things. Because they listen to me, I can kind of ham it up.

C: The students were obedient and they gave me respect. It was a great joy to teach them.

D: Cultural/geographic information, such as significant sites in Boston or New York, since we all knew we were going there, to reinforce classroom material with "realistic" and truly "experiential "learning.

E: Drills were always the easiest doing: drill practice, doing kind of response things. I think students were practiced in doing drills, like grammatical drills, in Japan. Another thing that was easy was to give them

tasks - a find-someone-who activity ("find someone who likes yellow shoes," "find someone who eats bananas for breakfast every morning") and then they have to go and do a search activity but talk to everybody in the class. So things that were structured were often the easiest: pair work, searching for information, or completing a task, or following through on a job. [**Interviewer**: Why was it so easy?] I think because there is a clear path in what they can do. So giving them the autonomy to complete the task without it being completely teacher centered, like giving them a list of questions that they have to ask their friends or a scavenger hunt or something. They know what they need to do. They know what their expectations are and they can follow through on that. And I think that's a cultural thing too because students aren't used to having the opportunity to be creative or in certain senses, when I taught American literature I had the students make *Manga* (Japanese Comics). So that was an opportunity to be creative and to bring their beliefs to language learning and their perception of what the image of the literature was and to kind of motivate them to read. [**Interviewer**: What would you do for students who are reluctant to do anything? Do you use your discipline as a teacher?] Accept them for where they are, but try to encourage them to take a risk and to realize that each one of them is in a different place personally as well as linguistically and culturally, and not to yell at them, but to find some way to reach them. For example, somebody said, "I'm really a terrible artist I can't do the Manga." I said, "For you, maybe doing a stick drawing is great. Or if you want to write a poem instead, or if you would like to sing a song, or if you have some other kind of talent, the way you like to interpret this, that's great." [**Interviewer**: Do you think sometimes you need to use authority as a teacher so that students work better?] If people handed me a paper late, I would say, today is

the due date. Before, like, if people did something wrong, and I would get upset or angry. . . Like if they give me paper late, I always tell them the rules before - for example, you lose ten points a day. It's your choice, you're responsible. You give it to me late, then it's ten points. And then not judging them, like saying, "You're bad and it's ten points," but "This is a really good paper; it would have been 'A,' but it's late, so it's 'B' now." Or "I really need to come here on time and it's important for me to have you be here on time and if you are late then you lose points from your final grade. So it's your choice. If you want to come late, that's fine but you also have a certain penalty that you have to pay." And for some teachers, that's really disgusting, terrible and disrespectful of students, but for me, I found that it creates order and responsibility on behalf of the students. I have one instructor who worked for me this past year who came to class half an hour late, fifteen minutes late, the students are getting up to be at class at eight o'clock in the morning. It wasn't something he valued. Then the students were coming in late and people didn't come to class, the whole kind of discipline thing. Students actually came to complain to me that they paid a lot of money for class, and this guy wasn't showing up, he wasn't doing his job, he wasn't really teaching and all this kind of thing. So I was really happy that they stood up for their rights. And that they were able to complain about that and to be assertive and to be proactive. But I was very angry with the teacher for being irresponsible, and I didn't rehire him. And he asked me to write a recommendation for him, and I really liked him as a person and as an intellectual he was very stimulating. He would say, "Oh, I've got to drive 45 minutes to get here" and sometimes he wouldn't show up for class and students would ask why he didn't come to the class. He wouldn't tell me he wasn't coming to class, so it's kind of weird.

8. How would you suggest that an ESL teacher deal with Japanese female students eighteen to nineteen years old?

A: Immediately get to know their names, try to do pair work more than group work. If you do group work you can have them do chorusing and repeating after you. That would be a way to start, but I guess I would suggest giving them situations they can do in twos or threes. So they're talking to each other. It would be better if it wasn't all Japanese. It would be better if it was mixed and they couldn't speak Japanese if they were sitting next to a Spanish, or a Russian, or a Chinese. They wouldn't be able to speak Japanese. I tell them all the time not to speak Japanese. But of course they still do.

B: You just have to keep doing whatever you can do to try to get them to talk, and sooner or later it'll work. Time. I think you have to not give up. You have to realize that sometimes it just takes time. You have to start with the knowledge the students feel incredibly embarrassed when asked to participate. You have to start with that, and say, "I know this is hard. I know this is embarrassing, I know you would never do this in Japan. But this is America, and everybody's crazy. This is what we do." I'm not afraid of being crazy, acting crazy with my students. If you act a little bit crazy, then they feel like it's fine for them to be crazy. If I dance around a little bit, or do something... [**Interviewer**: How long have you been an ESL teacher? Seems like you have lots of experiences..] Oh, a long time, more than 10 years. Basically, Japanese students will pretty much do whatever you ask them to do. And if they won't, then they need to talk about it. And if they're talking about why they're not going to do... for example, I asked my students last Fall to go and interview ten Americans about their opinion on marijuana, or should gays get married, or... I gave them some lists of some questions and

they had to go out. Sometimes I say find something you want to find out about and go ask people. Go ask people what they think of Hillary Clinton. Now at Proctor some people don't even know who Hillary Clinton is. Because I asked them to ask who Maya Angelou was -the poet- and a lot of native speakers didn't know who she was. So, I asked them to do something. This was Friday. Then Monday they came in, and not one person had done their homework. They all burst into tears. They all said, "We can't do this. Americans hate us. They run away when we ask them questions." That was the point where they had reached the rock bottom. That's the point at which the culture shock just completely hit... And I said, "Oh, I'm so sorry. That wasn't my idea. I'm not trying to get you to cry in class." "Americans hate us. They laugh at us. None of them will talk to us." I said, "I have a movie for you to see." And I went and got "Cold Water". They looked at that and they went, "Oh!" But you can't show it until they're ready for it. When they all freaked out and cried in class, I said, "I know what will help." That was the point at which I said OK I need to communicate with them about what's really going on. [**Interviewer**: So, you show this video all the time?] Well, I've showed it twice at the American. I showed it last Fall, and the Fall before. And they really respond to it. Especially there's that wonderful story about that guy from Zaire who goes to Burger King and he's got it figured out, He can order a number, 6 and the girl says, "For here or to go" And he doesn't know what that means. And my students are, like, "Oh wow, this happens to everybody." It's really hard to go from one culture to another. It's hard for me even to go from here to London. That's the same language. That's my family background. It's hard for anyone to go from one culture to another. It's hard for me to walk into the middle school in Lynn every day. That's a different culture. I feel like I need to take my passport. It's an inner city

school. These kids know nothing but poverty. They have no motivation to learn. Most of them have to go to school because welfare will take their mother's checks away if they don't go to school. So for me it's a whole different culture for me to drive thirty minutes everyday. So imagine what it's like for the Japanese girls.

C: Try to give assignments to give them power to cope with the world and to be independent. For example: travel arrangements and how to make telephone calls, how to make a friends through role play and practice in class. Assignments should be functional and give them an ability to be independent for their future travel and future lives. The goal is to be able to manage without husbands or tour guides, to go places by themselves eventually. I hope that in studying American culture and communication they learned how Americans see gender equality and individual independence.

D: First, be prepared to deal with social behavior norms close to a young (15-16-year-old) U.S. teenager, especially in matters of cross-cultural and classroom behavior. Not troublesome, but socialized to be "girlish" for a longer duration of their lives. Second, be prepared to encounter tears and /or other obvious sign of stress which may result from what you believe to be kind, helpful actions. They can be kind and helpful, but if an 18-19-year-old Japanese female has not had prior experience in a class with "American-style" teacher-student relationships, the effect may be to throw them emotionally off-balance in the class. Lastly, I would urge an American male teacher, with little or no experience with Japanese female students, to remember that what might be seen as patronizing, flirting, or even "silly" behavior from an 18- to 19-year-old American female student is usually, with 18- to 19-year-old Japanese students, simply a societally-condoned form of female behavior patterns, coy and fickle due to societal expectations.

The supervisor: How to structure activities that require them in an incremental and non-threatening way to interact more with the environment and people outside of the classroom - I think that would be important and I'd start that right in the beginning. Do you think it would have worked to ask each of them to try to set a goal for themselves about speaking and listening at the beginning? That's something I might do to help them to build awareness of the importance of what they were doing and maybe if you have six weeks, you do one goal setting at the beginning and you check in at two weeks and they revise the goals and see how much progress they've made, and they might change them and do it the next two weeks. So you have three check-in points or four check-in points. That's something to consider. Also it helps individualize it. It gives a teacher a lot of feedback about what the students think is important and also helps them to be very individual about what they are doing. I think some other things you discovered as you taught about giving them information-gap activities which gave them the information they needed but also required that they speak to each other. More of those sorts of activities.

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